Sailing Canadian Waters

An Exhibition Held at The Canadiana Gallery of The Royal Ontario Museum

November 23, 1979
to April 6, 1980

SAILING CANADIAN WATERS

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Sailing Canadian Waters

An Exhibition Held at
THE CANADIANA GALLERY of
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Organized by
Carol Baum and
Betty Minaker

cover,
H.M. Schooner NANCY, 1789-1814
Drawn by Rowley Murphy after plans
by C.H.J. Snider

design:
Carol Baum

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Fascination with ships and the sea has encouraged nautical themes in art for centuries. This exhibition of ship portraits features identified vessels built or operating in Canada. During the period covered, Canada's shipping played a major role in the exploration, settlement and economic developement of the land. The exhibition includes oil painting, watercolours, and prints by specialized marine artists as well as by military topographers and amateur painters. The paintings and prints are primarily from the Sigmund Samuel Collection of the Royal Ontario Museum, supplemented by two paintings from private collections.

Marine painting was an exacting art. In 1805, an instruction manual in the art of marine drawing, the Liber Nauticus, was published. In it, Dominique Serres, a noted marine artist, wrote,

> "Many are the obstacles to the attainment of a proficiency in drawing Marine subjects, particularly as it is not only requisite that a person desirous of excelling in this Art should possess a knowledge of the construction of a ship, or of what is denominated Naval Architecture together with the proportion of masts & yards, the width & cut of sails, &c; but he should likewise by acquainted with Seamanship."

This first-hand knowledge of the sea, coupled with an understanding of composition, portraying light and shadow across the surface of the water and rendering skies and reflections, was requisite knowledge for the working marine artist of the day.

Historical maritime occurrences such as naval battles, shipwrecks, fires at sea, and vessels locked in Arctic ice, were turned into dramatic themes in art. This concentration on disasters was partly due to the romantic movement in art, especially where it concerned the mysterious and powerful forces of nature which overcame man.

While romantic visions and terrifying tales of life at sea preoccupied some artists, the opposite pole of realism in showing a ship's portrait was a strong current throughout the 19th century. The Victorian era was the high point of the ship portrait commissioned by captains, owners of fleets, or as advertisements for companies who carried passengers. Magnificent seascapes and various angular views of ships were often sacrificed for the portrait where the profile dominated the entire page, with the sail plan clearly set against a plain sky. The anonymous artist might have been a captain or one of the crew with a knowledge of wind action on sails or proper rigging of ships, but with little training in fine art. While the ship itself was correct in every detail, there was seldom interest in filling in the background or placing the ship in a dramatic context.

Finally, every artist had an individual formula for painting his subject. He might follow a certain pattern for drawing waves or the ripple of flags in the wind. However, all the artists had one thing in common, a thorough knowledge of ships of their day and a commitment to transfer that accurately in painting.

Early Harbour Views

Some of the first artists in Canada were officers of the British Army and the Royal Navy. Drawing landscape and watercolour painting were subjects taught to training officers. Navy cadets sketched coastal profiles and harbours - the army officers drew inland views. Apart from the actions of 1776, 1812, and 1837, a posting to British North America was a peacetime posting which afforded the military officer-artists ample opportunity to paint their surroundings.

Thomas Patten, a military draughtsman, is said to have accompanied General Amherst's expedition against Montreal in 1760. His watercolour view of Montreal, (entry #2), engraved by P. Canot and published by Thomas Jeffreys in London in 1762, is believed to be the first engraved view of the city after its occupation by the British in 1760.

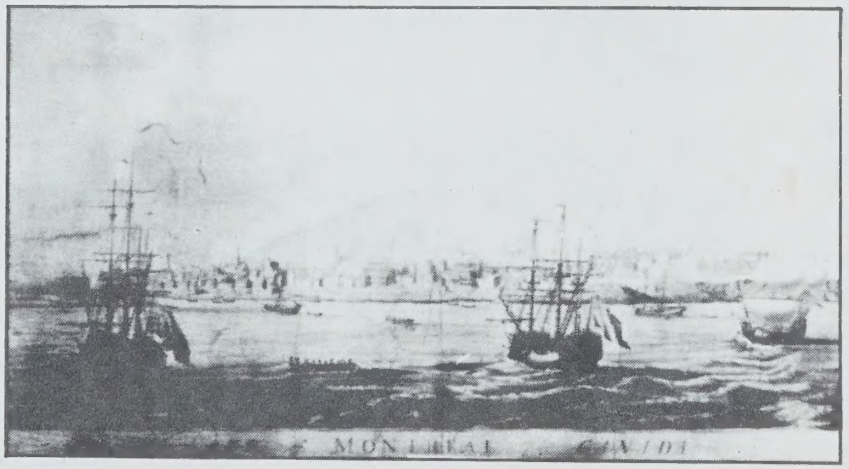
Charles Randle was captain of the ship PEGGY, (entry #4) on the Quebec-Halifax run of 1778. He served with the Royal Navy on Lake Champlain during the American Revolution. As well as this view of Prince Edward Island, he also sketched sites in New England, Nova Scotia, and the St. Lawrence area.

J.P. Cockburn was posted to Canada in 1822-1823 and 1826-1832 as a Lieutenant-Colonel. He is well known for his many European and Canadian topographical watercolours and for his illustrated travel books.

1 His Majesty's Dockyard at Halifax

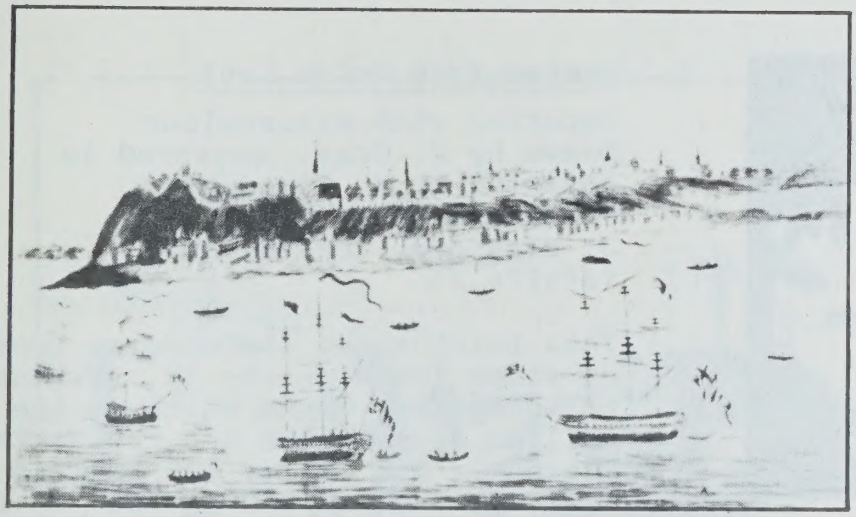
Black wash, pen and ink, with brown ink notation
Artist unknown
c.1769
958.97

The PENZANCE, a 44-gun, 5th rate ship was built in 1747 and sold in 1766. On the left of the picture, she is hoved down for repairs.



2 A View of Montreal in Canada

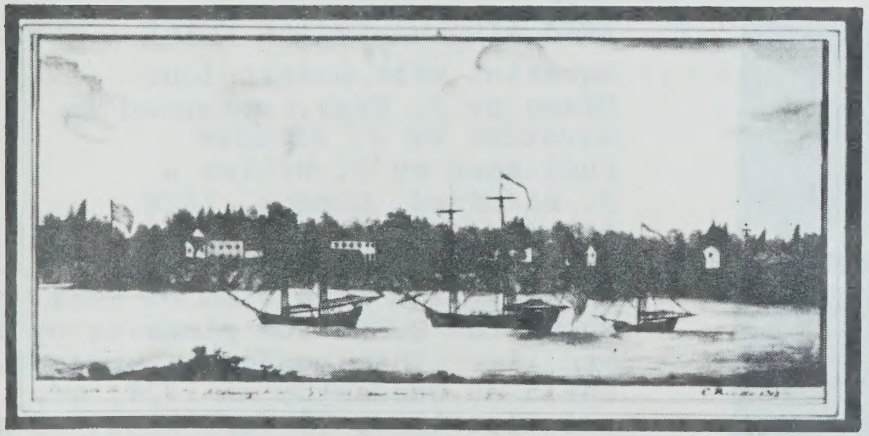
Watercolour, pen and ink
Thomas Patten (active 1760-1762)
c.1760
956.198



3 A Perspective View of Quebec City

Watercolour, pen and ink
J. Hay
Sept. 24, 1813
950.224.30

A copy of the 1760 engraving after Hervey Smyth.



4 Charlottetown as it was in 1779

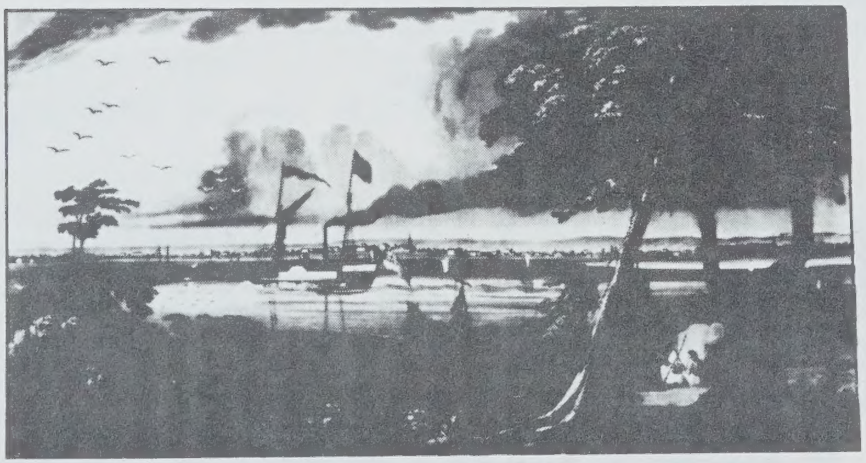
Watercolour
Charles Randle (active 1775-1813)
1813
954.100.4

H.M.S. CABOT was formerly U.S.S. CABOT, captured by the British in March, 1777. She was based in Halifax during the American Revolution as a dispatch vessel. The ships to the left and right, the PEGGY, and the PRISE, are merchant vessels.

5 Quebec from Point Levi

Aquatint with watercolour
Drawn by J. Gray, engraved in aquatint by J. Gleadah
Published by J. Willet & J. Blanford, London, 1828
960x276.25

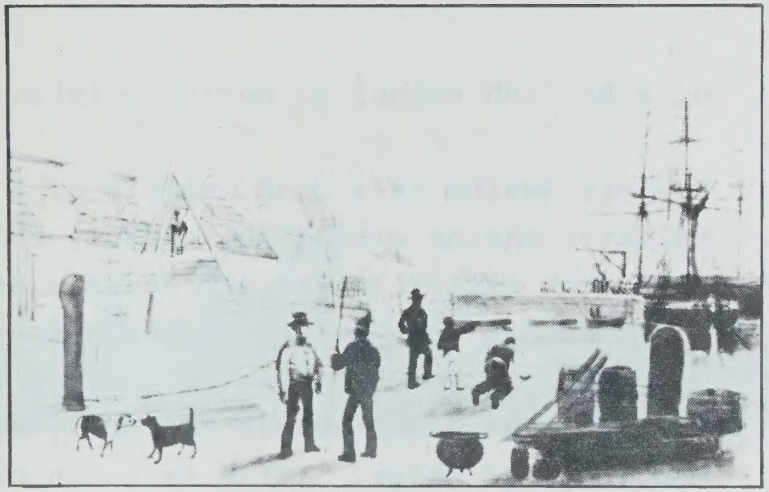
This print shows the diverse types of ships found on the St. Lawrence at this time, among which is the sailing ship OTTAWA and the WATERLOO steamer. The latter was built at Montreal in 1826 and wrecked by ice in 1829.



6 York from Gibraltar Point

Aquatint with watercolour
Drawn by J. Gray, engraved in aquatint by J. Gleadah
Published by J. Willet & J. Blanford, London, 1828
960x66.16

An early and rare view of York shows the QUEENSTON steaming by in profile. This passenger steamer, built at Queenston in 1824, was 146 feet long, 24 feet wide, 10 feet deep and 350 tons.



7 Lower Town Wharf and Shipyards

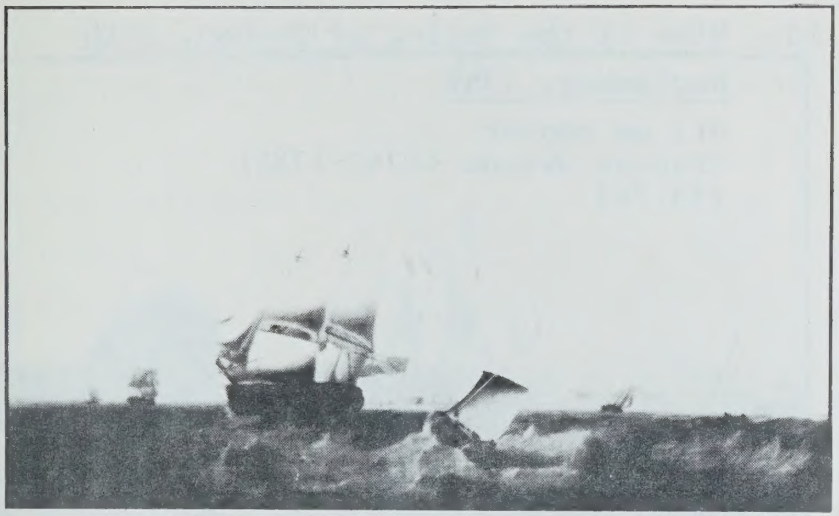
Watercolour over pencil
James Pattison Cockburn (1779-1847)
c.1830
951.82.3

Schools of Marine Painting

Although representations of the sea and ships are found in art throughout history, the true birth of marine painting did not occur until the second half of the 16th century in Holland, with the rise to maritime power of the Dutch Republic. The van de Velde family, father and son, raised the standard of marine painting to its greatest heights. William van de Velde the elder, (1611-1693), stressed fidelity of detail in the ships he painted. His meticulous drawings are accepted as a historical archive of great importance in ship architecture and rig of the period. The paintings of William van de Velde the Younger, (1633-1707), are valued for the harmonious use of light and atmosphere in the composition and in the way the sea and sky are rendered in all their moods. The tradition of sensitive and accurate portraiture, came to England with the van de Veldes in the winter of 1672. Their precise style and unequivocal genius fostered the growth of a British school of marine painting.

Francis Swaine is a good example of a talented marine artist who closely followed the Dutch masters. The art dealers of the day sold his work as "English van de Veldes." Although his paintings are skilfully executed and reveal his considerable knowledge of ships, little is known of his practical experience of the sea. Swaine is at his best in H.M.S. VANGUARD off Percé Island, (entry #9), a fresh, breezy picture where he demonstrates a lightness of touch and a good sense of colour.

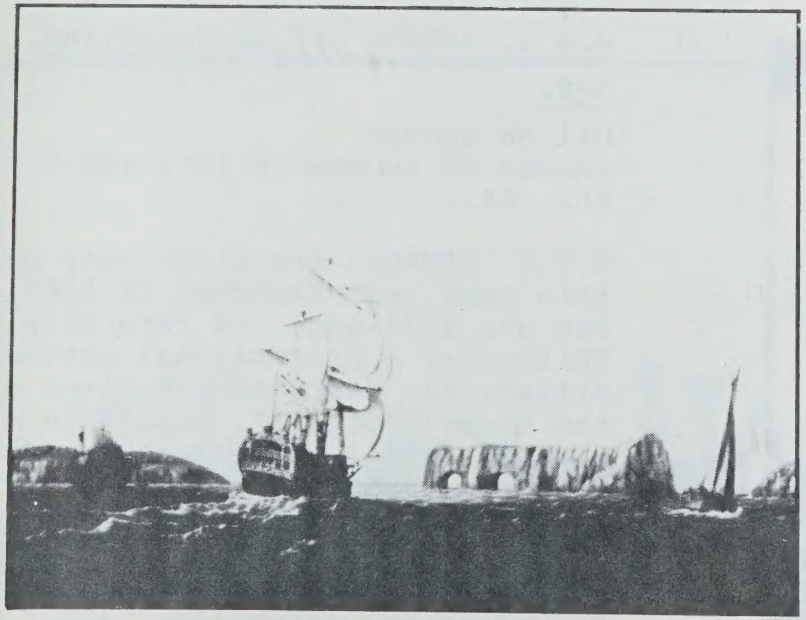
Thomas Whitcombe was an accomplished and prolific artist who devoted his entire life to marine painting. In the H.M.S. CANADA off Newfoundland, (entry #11), he shows not only a mastery of medium and composition but also, a thorough understanding of a ship in its element, responding to the force and direction of the wind and a sea full of movement.



8 Admiral Howe's Flagship Setting out from Dover to Quebec

Oil on canvas
Thomas Whitcombe (c.1752-1827)
957.182

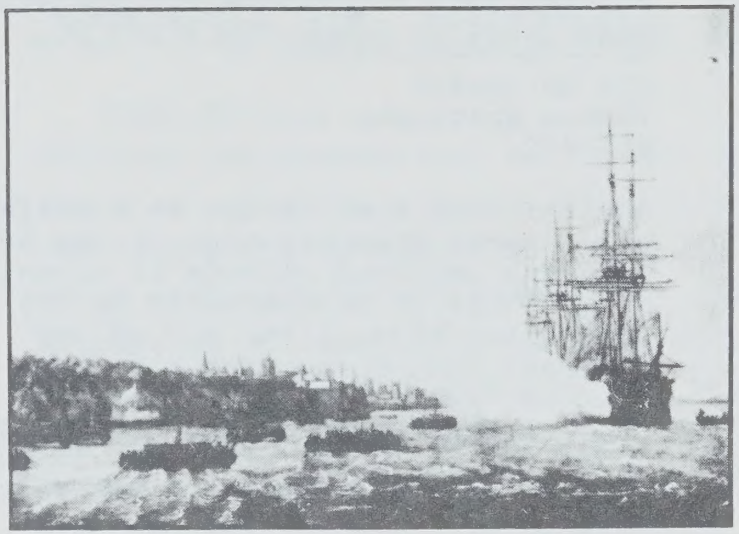
Admiral Howe contributed to a fuller and clearer communication at sea by adopting improved methods of signalling. This is demonstrated by the Blue Peter flag at the top of the foremast indicating that his flagship is "ready to sail".
Admiral Howe captured the ALCIDE off the mouth of the St. Lawrence in 1755, in the early days of the Seven Years' War.



9 H.M.S. VANGUARD off Percé Island in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence

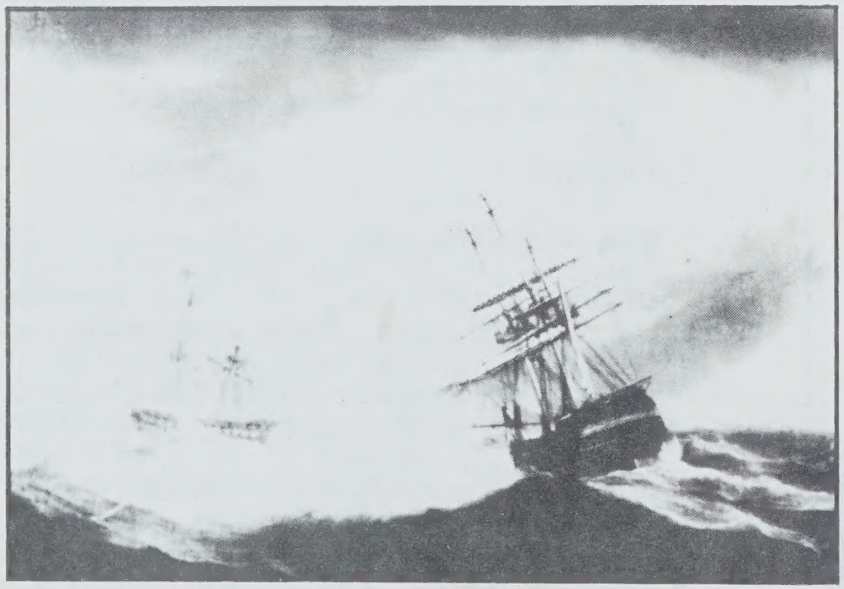
Oil on canvas
Francis Swaine (1740-1782)
1760
948x267.2

The VANGUARD, the fourth ship of this name in the British Navy, was built at Cowes in 1748, was of 1,419 tons and carried 70 guns. She took part in the Seven Years' War and was present at the sieges of Louisbourg in 1758 and of Quebec in 1759. In 1760, the VANGUARD returned to Canada as part of Commodore Swanton's squadron, to raise the siege of Quebec and thus secure Canada for the British. She was sold out of service in 1774. Swaine was awarded the Society of Arts' medal for his seapieces in 1764 and 1765.



10 View of the Taking of Quebec, 13th September, 1759

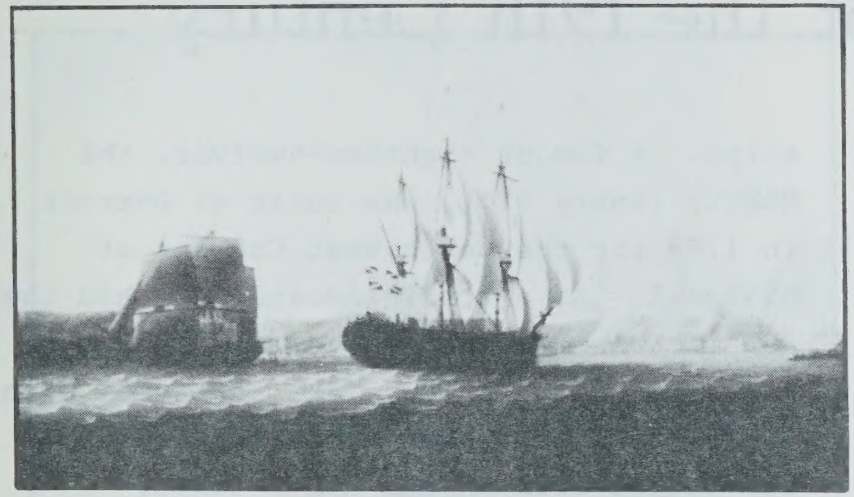
Oil on copper
Francis Swaine (1740-1782)
953.203



11 H.M.S. CANADA off Newfoundland, 1782

Oil on canvas
Thomas Whitcombe (c.1752-1827)
962.106.1

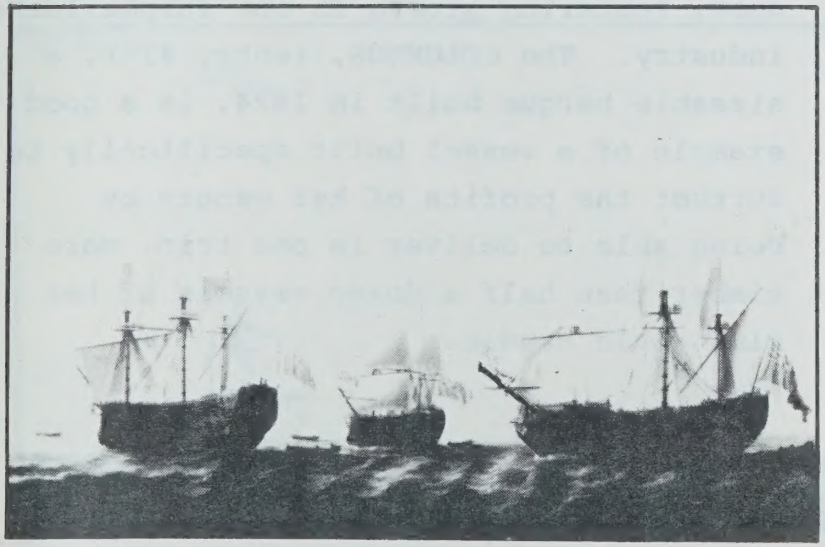
H.M.S. CANADA, the first ship of this name, was launched in 1765. She was a 74-gun, 3rd rate ship. Whitcombe, a professional marine artist, has captured the drama of the vessel in peril, caught in a furious squall. Fortunately, she survived under the skilful hand of her commander, Captain the Hon. William Cornwallis, while her two sister ships, also 74s, were dismasted and foundered. The CANADA was broken up in 1834.



12 H.M. Frigate PEARL off Quebec, 1785

Oil on canvas
Lt. Wm. Elliott (active 1780-1792)
Exhibited at the Royal Academy, 1786
961.2

The PEARL, launched in 1762, was a 32-gun, 5th rate frigate. This fast, full-rigged ship was renamed PROTHÉE in 1825 and broken up in 1832.



13 H.M.S ROYAL WILLIAM

Oil on canvas
Attributed to Richard Paton (1717-1791)
959.283

The ROYAL WILLIAM, flagship to the distinguished English Admiral Boscawen, is unusually rendered from three different view points. She was built in 1670 and called the PRINCE. In 1692, she was rebuilt with 100 guns and renamed the ROYAL WILLIAM. Her last modification occurred in 1719, when she was given 84 guns. She was broken up in 1813.

Sail at the Beginning of the 19th Century

Although the War of 1812 related to the wider Napoleonic wars and involved naval forces along the American seaboard, there was also a great deal of action on the lower Great Lakes. As waterways were the most efficient mode of travel at that time, the lake fleets played a decisive role in the war. In order to upgrade their navy the British established shipyards at places such as Amherstburg, Niagara, and Kingston. The ST. LAWRENCE, (entry #16), launched at Kingston in 1814, was the largest warship ever built on the Great Lakes.

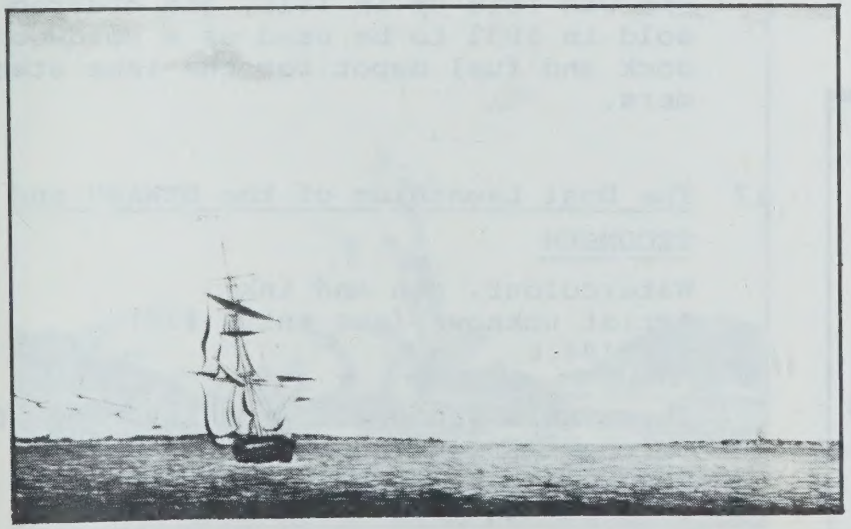
During this period, existing merchant vessels were frequently converted to warships. A famous eighteen-twelver, the NANCY, (entry #21), was built at Detroit in 1789 for the North West Company of Montreal. As a trading vessel she had the reputation of being the fastest and most reliable on the lakes. She was armed with twelve guns and taken over for service in the War of 1812 on the upper lakes.

After the war, mercantile pursuits began anew, fostering growth in the shipbuilding industry. The COLUMBUS, (entry #24), a sizeable barque built in 1824, is a good example of a vessel built specifically to further the profits of her owners by being able to deliver in one trip, more timber than half a dozen vessels of her time could handle.

14 The BONNE CITOYENNE Towing her Prize

Brown wash, pen and ink over pencil
George Webster (active 1797-1809)
July 6, 1809
955.78

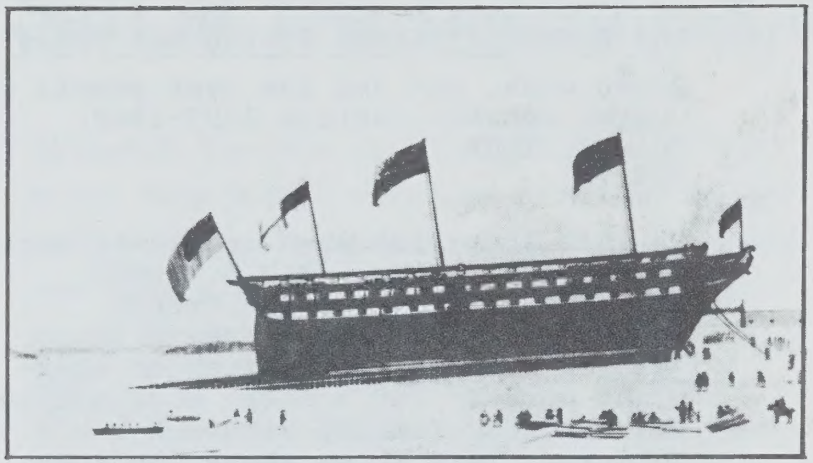
On July 5th, 1809 when in mid-Atlantic en route to Quebec, H.M.S. BONNE CITOYENNE discovered the French FURIEUSE in the act of taking a British merchantman. After an overnight pursuit and a seven hour battle the FURIEUSE finally struck her colours. This scene shows the corvette BONNE CITOYENNE, a 21-gun, ship-rigged sloop towing the FURIEUSE into Halifax.



15 H.M.S. WANDERER Aground in the River St. Lawrence

Watercolour and black ink over pencil
Artist unknown
967.50.4

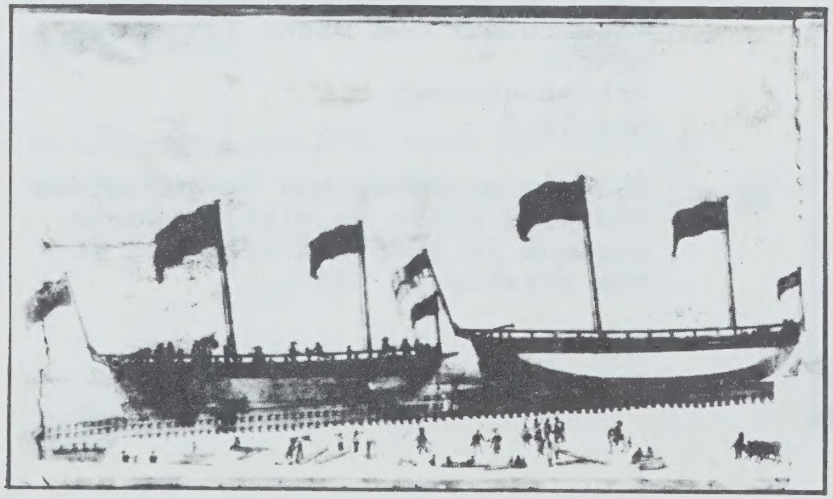
This is probably the 24-gun sloop WANDERER built at Mistleythorne, England in 1806 and sold out of the service in 1817.



16 The Launching of the ST. LAWRENCE, 112 Guns, 1814

Watercolour, pen and ink
Artist unknown (see entry #17)
May, 1815
967.106.1

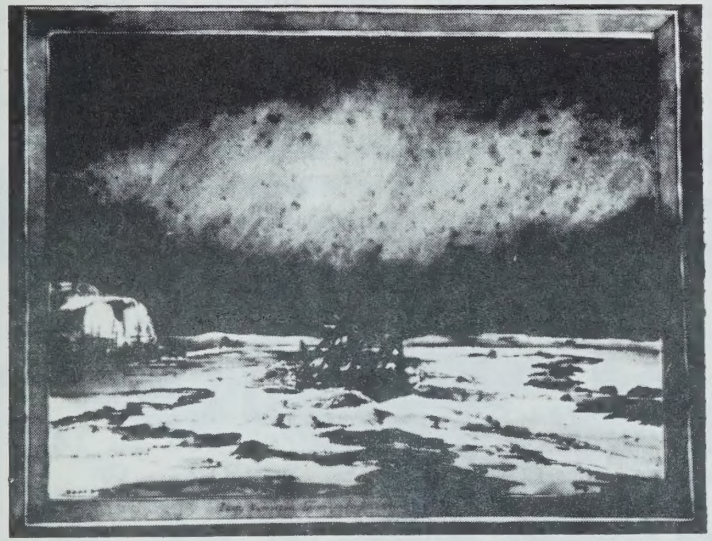
A contemporary drawing depicts the battleship ST. LAWRENCE ready to be launched from her cradle at the Kingston Naval Yard. She was built as a ship of the line, fully rigged with 3 gun decks, carrying 112 guns. Manned by a crew of a thousand men, she was more powerful than the combined American fleet. Without ever firing a shot, she gave the British supremacy over the Great Lakes waterways, hastening an end to the war. She was laid up in 1815, and ordered sold in 1831 to be used as a cordwood dock and fuel depot for the lake steamers.



17 The Dual Launching of the NEWASH and TECUMSEH

Watercolour, pen and ink
Artist unknown (see entry #16)
967.106.2

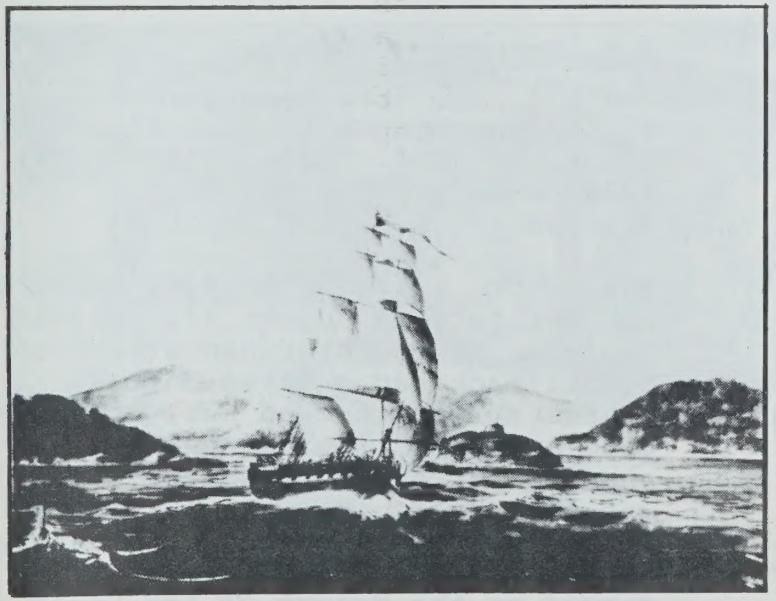
These twin schooners were launched at Chippewa Creek, Ontario in 1815. They were built to strengthen the British fleet in the War of 1812, and were put to civilian service in 1817. They were ordered for sale in 1831, and sank in Penetanguishene Harbour in 1832. The NEWASH was raised in 1953.



18 The LADY HAMILTON Transport on Shore off Charles River

Watercolour, pen and ink over pencil
Artist unknown (see entry #19)
Dec. 4, 1816
968.147.10

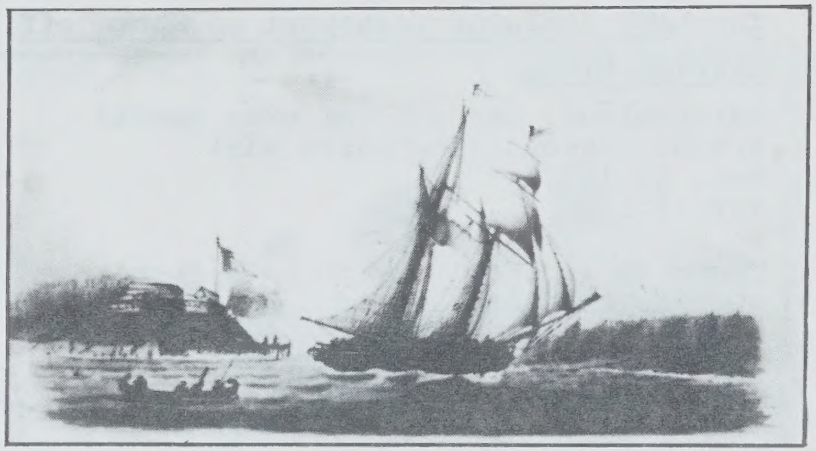
There is a pencil sketch of a ship's hull on the verso.



19 The LADY HAMILTON Transport leaving Halifax Harbour

Watercolour, pen and ink
Artist unknown (see entry #18)
968.147.10

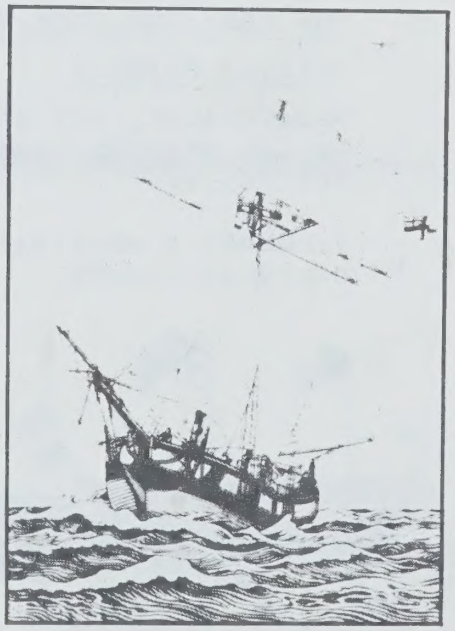
Probably a chartered merchant ship carrying troops.



20 H.M. Schooner SAUK Entering the River St. Clair at the Mouth of Lake Huron, with a View of Fort Gratiot, Septr. 14, 1815

Watercolour over pencil
Adam Gordon, Viscount Kenmure (1791-1847)
c.1840
950.27.4

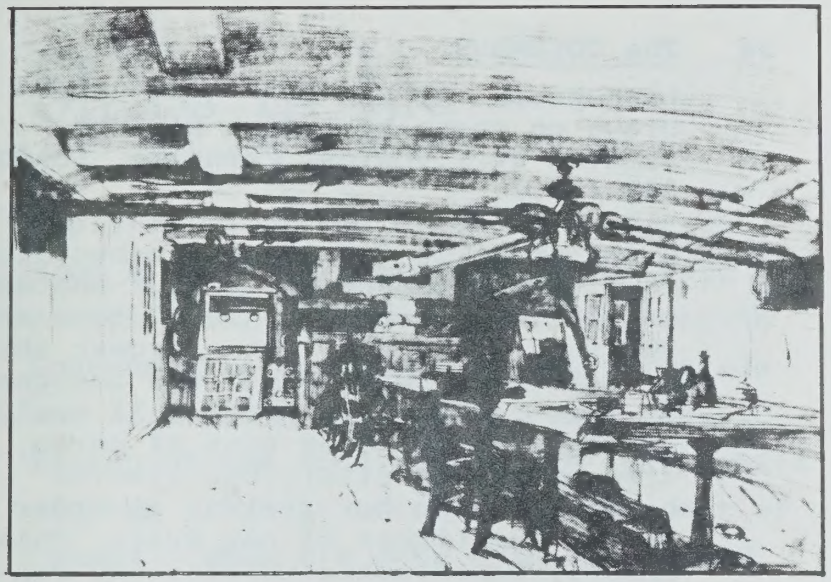
Built at Black Rock, New York, 1809, she was originally the merchant ship, CATHARINE, purchased in 1812 and renamed U.S.S. SOMERS. On August 12, 1814 the British captured and renamed her SAUK. She returned to merchant service in 1817.



21 H.M. Schooner NANCY

Pen and ink, with watercolour
Rowley Murphy (1891-1975) after plans by C.H.J. Snider (1879-1972)
1936
976.236

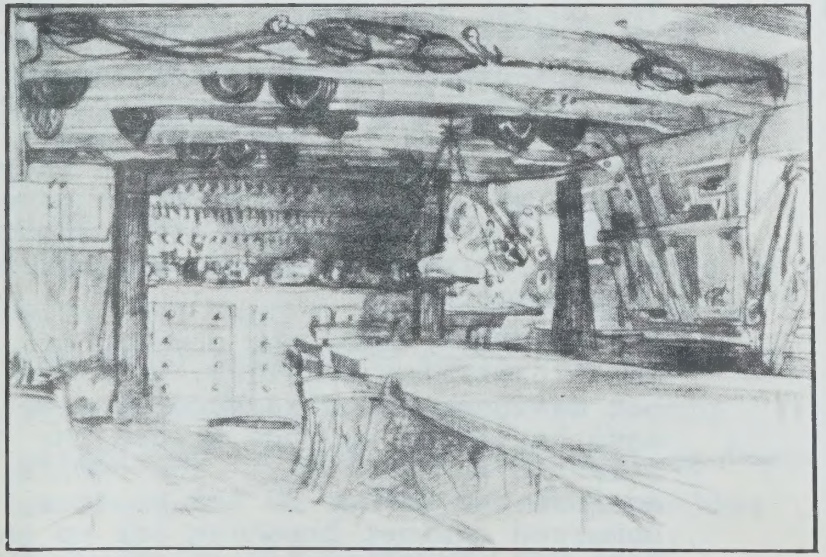
The NANCY, built in 1789 at Detroit met her fate on August 14, 1814 at the time of the American attack on Michilimackinac. Three United States ships attacked her, and despite a gallant resistance, she was chased into the Nottawasaga River and destroyed. Mr. C.H.J. Snider found the sunken hull of the NANCY in the 1920s and she is now preserved at the Museum of the Upper Lakes at Wasaga Beach.



22 The Mess Room, H.M.S. HASTINGS

Black crayon on grey paper with touches of gouache
John Richard Coke Smythe (1808-1882)
1838
950.114.1

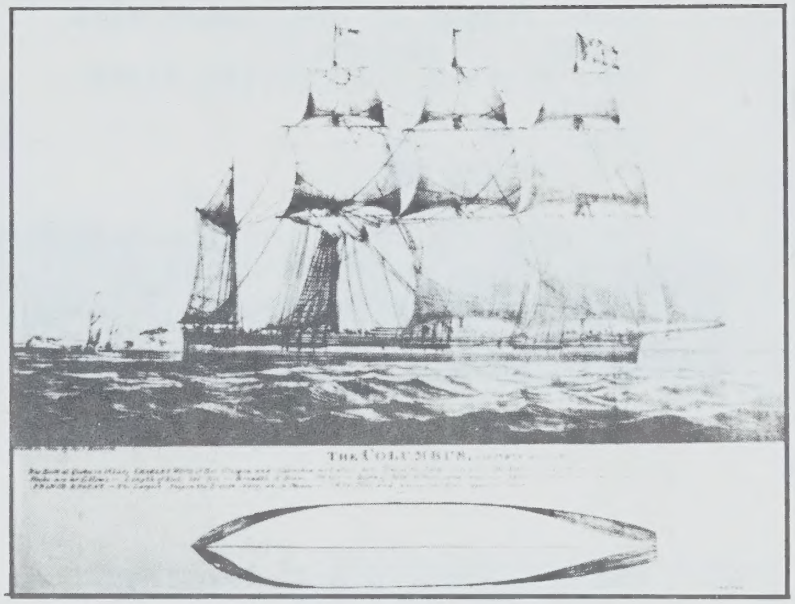
The artist sailed for Canada aboard this vessel as drawing master to the household of the Earl of Durham, Canada's newly appointed Governor-General.



23 The Gun Room, H.M.S. HASTINGS

Black crayon on grey paper with touches of gouache
John Richard Coke Smythe (1808-1882)
1838
950.114.2

These interiors accurately describe the areas below deck. The passage between England and Canada at this time might have taken at least 14 days if conditions were favourable. On this voyage, the HASTINGS was delayed for several days off the banks of Newfoundland because of storms. It was then that these two studies were sketched.



24 The COLUMBUS

Lithograph
Drawn on stone by Joseph Harwood
Printed by S.Vowles, Cornhill, London
955.130.1

Built at l'Île d'Orléans, Quebec, in 1824, the COLUMBUS was a four-masted solid timber barque of 3,690 tons and 301 feet in length. The largest ship of her time, this vessel was designed so that her square timber hull could not only carry 6,300 tons of cargo, (red and white pine), but also be broken up upon her arrival in order to use the timber of her hull. This cheaply constructed carrier was conceived to evade the British Timber Tax on oak and squared pine imported from Canada. She was a cumbersome and ill-proportioned vessel and as the "London Times" in November, 1824 described her, "...she could have been but as a log of wood in a short, choppy sea, one of which might have broken over midships almost without anybody forward or aft knowing of the circumstances..."

The COLUMBUS under the command of Captain William McKellar, with her designer, Charles Wood aboard, made her first passage across the Atlantic successfully. The owners, against the advice of her builder, demurred against breaking her up and sent her across the ocean for another timber cargo. On this voyage she foundered.

Ships in Ice

Exploration of the Arctic in order to find a northern route to the Far East was always a burning ambition. The British Government, encouraged by the fur-trade and national rivalries, supported exploration of the Arctic, Prairie and Pacific regions steadily after their conquest of Canada. When Sir John Franklin failed to return from his voyage of 1845 the many search expeditions sent to look for him between 1849 and 1854 added greatly to the charting of the Arctic coastline.

John Clevely the Younger, although trained as a shipwright, also studied with Paul Sandby, the Drawing Master at the Royal Academy at Woolwich. Clevely went with Captain Phipps on an Arctic expedition in 1773 that only went as far as Iceland. On Clevely's return he won a prize for his drawings, and later engravings of there views were published in a book Phipps wrote in 1773. (entry #25)

Sir Edward Belcher's search in the ASSISTANCE and PIONEER, between 1852 and 1854 for the lost Franklin expedition discovered relics of the vanished party. The two lithographs (entries #29 & #30) illustrated the book, A Series of 14 Sketches Made During the Voyage up Wellington Channel in Search of Sir John Franklin, published by Commander Walter M. May in London, 1855.

The watercolours (entries #27 & #28) were painted after Franklin's fate was discovered by the M'Clintock party in 1857-58 and published by Sir Francis Leopold M'Clintock in London, 1860. Franklin's EREBUS and TERROR were abandoned in April, 1848 after having been immobilized in the ice since September of 1846. No trace of the ships was ever found although M'Clintock found two skeltons, two guns, a rowboat and some small articles at Point Victory, King William's Land.

25 H.M. Ships RACEHORSE and CARCASS at Anchor in an Ice Field and the Ships' Company Playing on the Ice on 31 July 1773

Watercolour, pen and ink
John Clevely the Younger (1747-1786)
1774
962.65.5

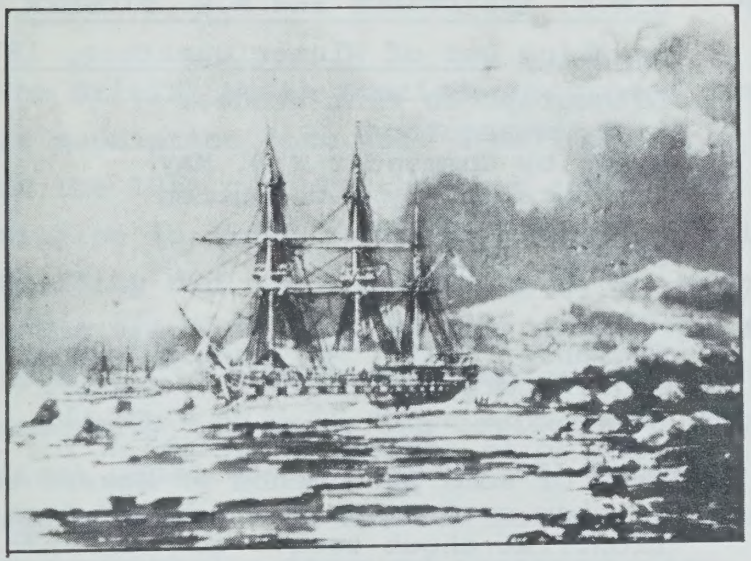
This playful scene which took place on Captain Constantine John Phipps expedition in search of a northern route to India, was used to illustrate Captain Phipps' book, "A Voyage Toward the North Pole Undertaken by His Majesty's Command 1773", published in London, 1774.

The CARCASS was a bomb vessel launched in 1759 and sold in 1784. The RACEHORSE, originally the French MARQUIS DE VAUDREUIL, was captured by the Royal Navy in 1757. She was taken by the Americans in 1776, then destroyed by the British on the Delaware River, 1777.

26 Iceberg

Oil on glass
Artist unknown
Late 19th century
970.191.6a

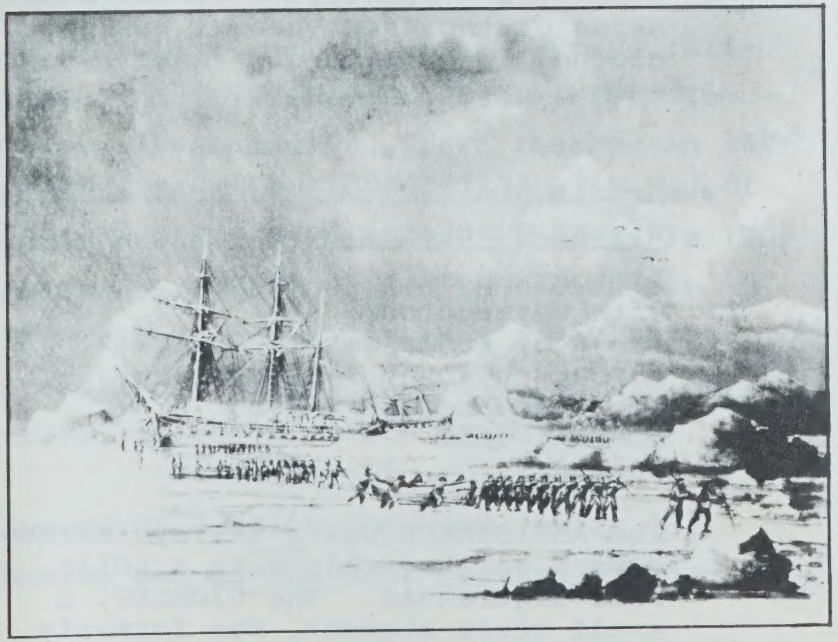
This finely executed painting on Arctic waters was originally meant to be viewed through a slide lantern. It is still framed in its original mount.



27 First Winter in the Ice at Beachey Island, Melville Sound; Sir John Franklin's Last Expedition, 1845-1848

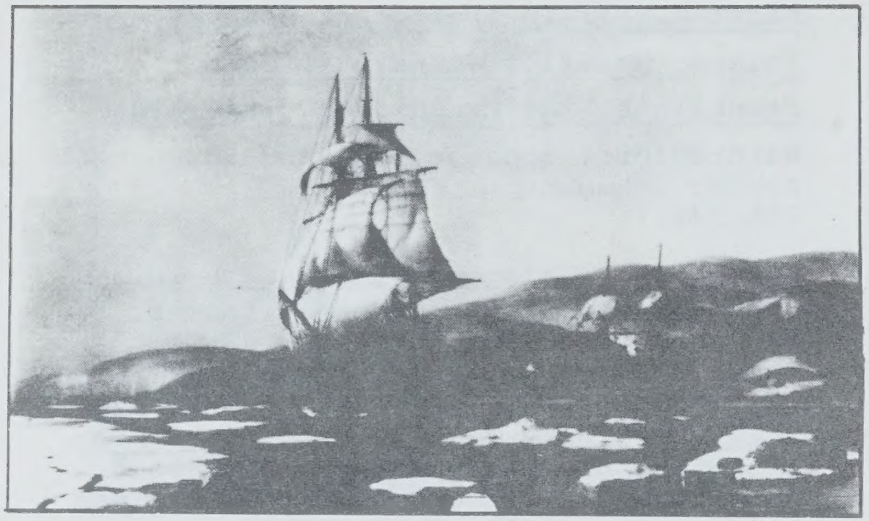
Watercolour, gouache, pen and ink
Artist unknown
955.141.1

The EREBUS and TERROR were built as bomb vessels with reinforced frames. For an earlier Antarctic expedition they were fitted with inner hulls making their sides from 18" to 27" thick, and their bows were strengthened with iron plates. They were both barque-rigged, furnished with locomotive steam engines and screw propellors.



28 Abandoning the Ships, April 25, 1848: Sir John Franklin's Last Expedition

Watercolour, gouache, pen and ink
Artist unknown
955.141.3



29 H.M.S. ASSISTANCE and S.S. PIONEER

Breaking out of Winter Quarters, 1854

Lithograph on tint stone,
with watercolour
Drawn by Commander W.W. May
Lithographed by F.G. Dutton
Published by Day & Son
London, 1855
960.60.10

Commander Walter May in his book of 1855, wrote the following account about this scene, "...we were all waiting in anxious expectation for a gale or some phenomenon of nature to release us from this ice-bound position...at about twelve the fog suddenly rose, and showed us that we were liberated - domestic offices, bearskins drying, dirt heaps, washed clothes, etc. were all floating away, each on their own piece of ice..."

30 H.M.S. ASSISTANCE and S.S. PIONEER in

Winter Quarters, Returning Daylight

Lithograph on tint stone,
with watercolour
Drawn by Commander W.W. May
Lithographed by F.G. Dutton
Published by Day & Son
London, 1855
960.60.7

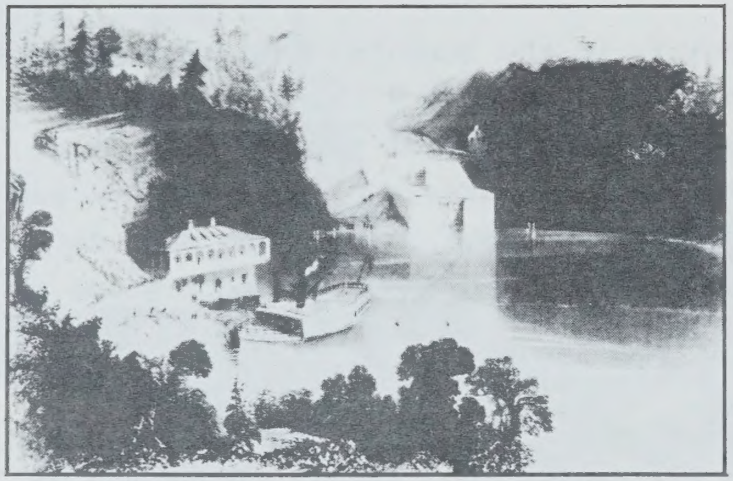
The ASSISTANCE was a sturdy, barque-rigged sailing ship with a polar bear figurehead. The PIONEER, a small screw steamer, was formerly used in the Irish cattle trade.

Sidewheelers and Sternwheelers

The British North American provinces grew in population form half a million early in the 19th century to three and a half million in 1861. At first, road and rail building did not keep pace with the economic needs of this growing community, and as a result inland waterways were most essential for trade and settlement. The first paddlewheeler on the St. Lawrence was built in 1809 and ran between Quebec and Montreal. Improved transportation came with the building of canals at Lachine in 1801-1804, on the Rideau River, 1826-1832, and at Welland in 1824-1829. The Ottawa River had its first steamer in 1822, and the first steamer to navigate Lake Ontario was launched near Kingston in 1816. Paddlewheelers remained in use on the inland rivers and lakes long after screw-propelled steamers were adopted for ocean travel by the mid-19th century.

The CHIEF JUSTICE ROBINSON (entry #33), became one of the most popular paddle-wheelers in the Toronto, Hamilton, Niagara area. In 1846, Sir Richard Bonnycastle found the interior of this steamer decorated with flowers, a piano, nautical and portrait paintings, "...which, when the lamps were lit, and conversation going on between the ladies and gentlemen then and there assembled, made one quite forget we were on Lake Ontario...". She frequently ran all winter, and landed passengers on the ice when Toronto harbour was frozen.

The ALGOMA (entry #39), was the pioneer steamer of the Collingwood and Lake Superior area. It always made money for its owners, the Royal Mail Line. Based in Toronto, the ALGOMA travelled to Georgian Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay and Hudson's Bay posts on Lake Superior. The ALGOMA was use as a troop ship on May 27, 1870, when she landed soldiers at Thunder Bay to quell the Métis uprising on the Red River.



31 Locks on the Rideau Canal near Bytown with the SHANNON

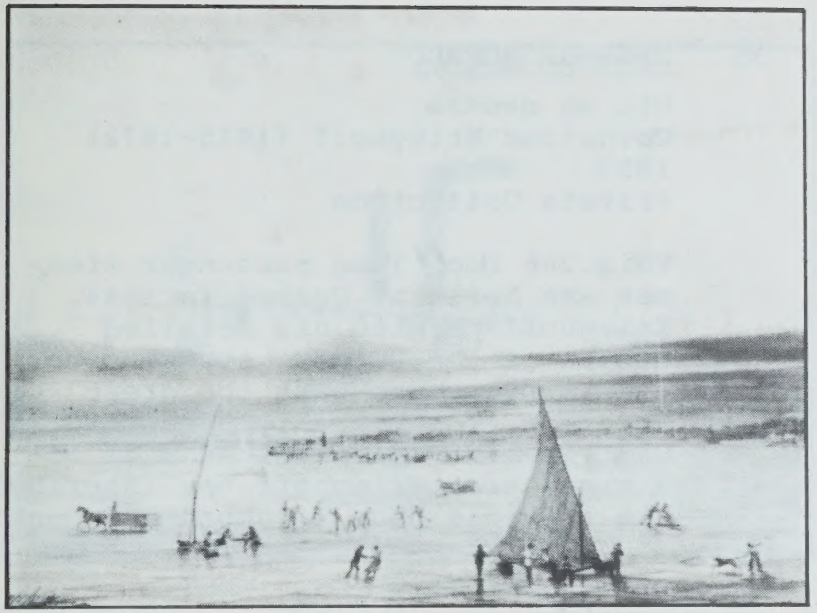
Steel engraving
Engraved by J.C. Armytage
after W.H. Bartlett
Published by Geo. Virtue, London
960.48.5

The SHANNON was built in 1828 and used on the upper reaches of the Ottawa River.

32 CAPE BRETON Steamer, Commanded by E. Smith, R.N.

Aquatint with watercolour
Engraved by C. Rosenberg and
Painted by W.J. Huggins
Published by F.S. Crawley,
London, 1836
958.14.1

The year she was built, in 1833 at Blackwall, England, the CAPE BRETON made the passage from Plymouth to Sydney, Nova Scotia. This was the first steam-assisted ship to make the difficult crossing, east to west across the North Atlantic.



33 The Steamer CHIEF JUSTICE ROBINSON Landing Passengers on the Ice in Toronto Bay

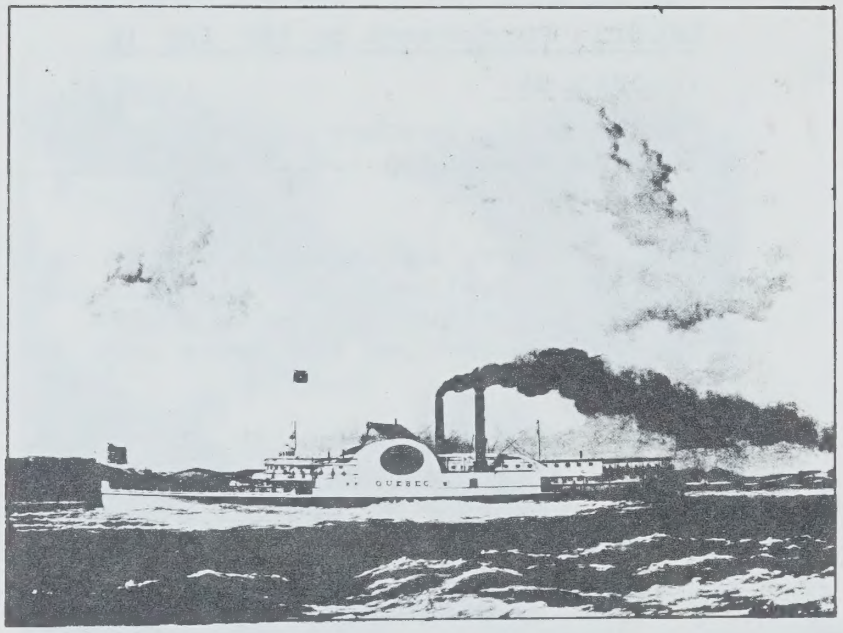
Watercolour, touches of gouache
William Armstrong (1822-1914)
952.169.6

This steamer, built at Queenston in 1842, was designed with a bow in the shape of a ploughshare, to enable her to cut through the waves more easily.

34 Steamboat Wharf, Montreal with the Sidewheeler, QUEEN

Lithograph, on tint stone, with watercolour
Drawn on stone by J. Duncan (1806-1881)
Printed by Matthew's Lithography, Montreal, 1843
950.29.2

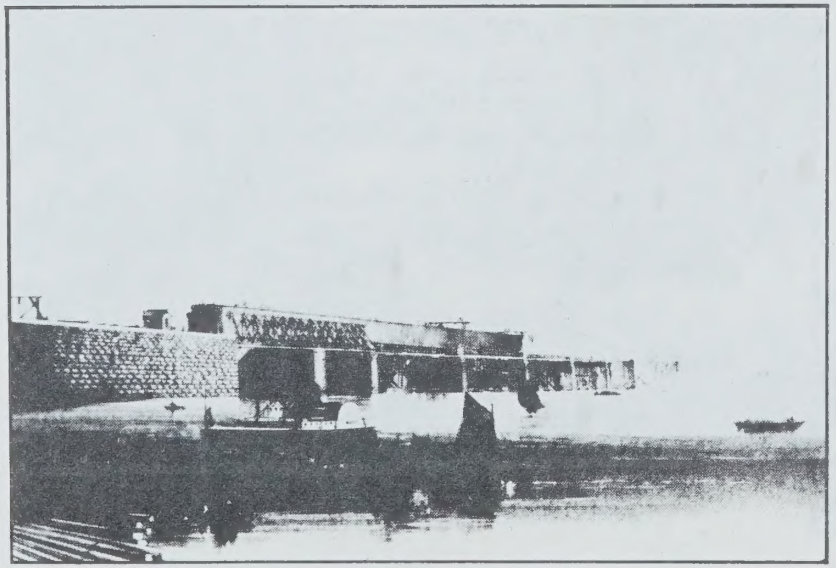
The QUEEN was built at Sorel, Quebec, in 1840. In 1843 she was sold to the St. Lawrence Steamboat Company owned by John Molson. She carried passengers between Montreal and Quebec City until 1860 when she was scrapped.



35 Steamer QUEBEC

Oil on canvas
Cornelius Krieghoff (1815-1872)
1853
Private Collection

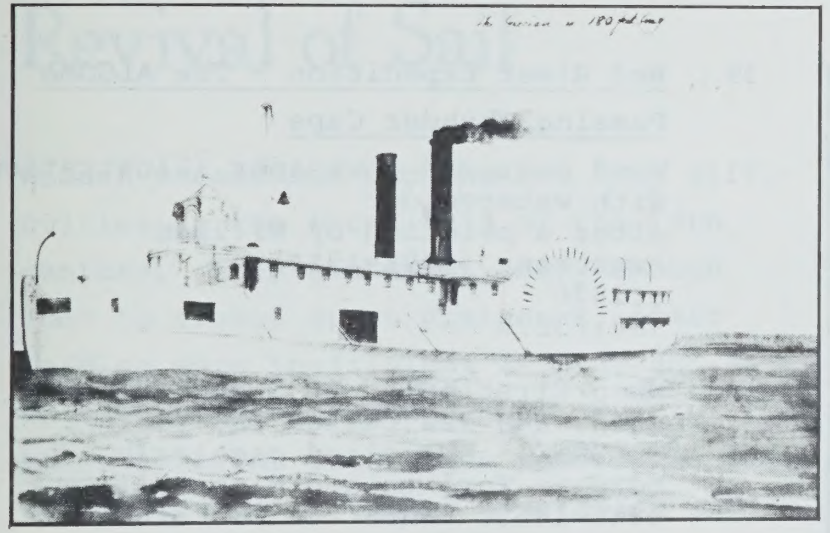
This 266 foot long passenger steamer was built at Quebec in 1844. Krieghoff painted his detailed canvas of the QUEBEC, steaming up the St. Lawrence past the great fortress, for the ship's master, Captain A.N. Raddall. As well as a signature, Krieghoff has inscribed his initials on a trunk aboard deck.



36 The MUSKRAT, View from below the South Abutment

Lithograph on tint stone by
Kell Brothers, after a photograph
by Notman, Montreal
Published by John Weale,
London, 1860
960x280.25

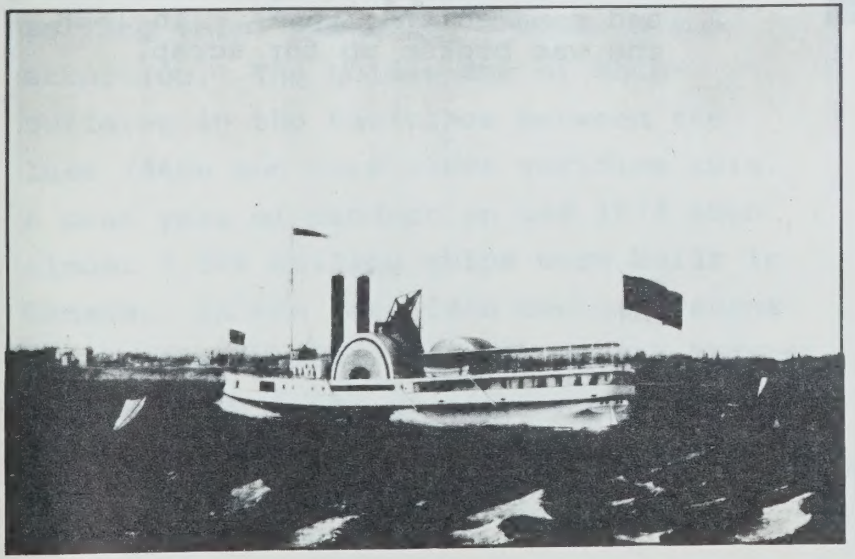
The MUSKRAT was a passenger steamer built at Montreal in 1854.



37 Paddlewheel Steamer GRECIAN

Pencil and watercolour
Edwin Whitefield (1816-1892)
953.125.1al

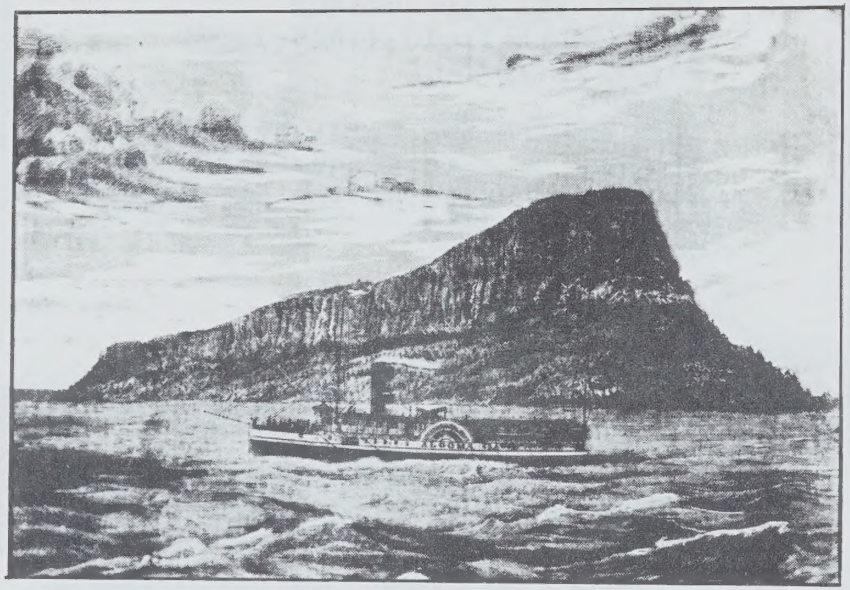
The GRECIAN was built at Montreal in 1864 as a passenger sidewheeler. She was wrecked on the St. Lawrence on May 18, 1869.



38 Sidewheel Steamer CITY OF TORONTO

Oil on canvas
W.E. Wright (active 1864-1869)
1869
Private Collection

The second steamer of the name, the CITY OF TORONTO was built at Niagara in 1864 for Captain D. Milloy. Of 600 tons burden and 202 feet long, she plied regularly between Toronto and Lewiston, New York. In the Fenian Raid of 1866 she carried the Queen's Own to Port Colborne. In 1882 she was destroyed by fire at Port Dalhousie. W.E. Wright, who exhibited as a professional painter, was commissioned by Captain Milloy to paint this portrait when both were residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake.



39 Red River Expedition - The ALGOMA

Passing Thunder Cape

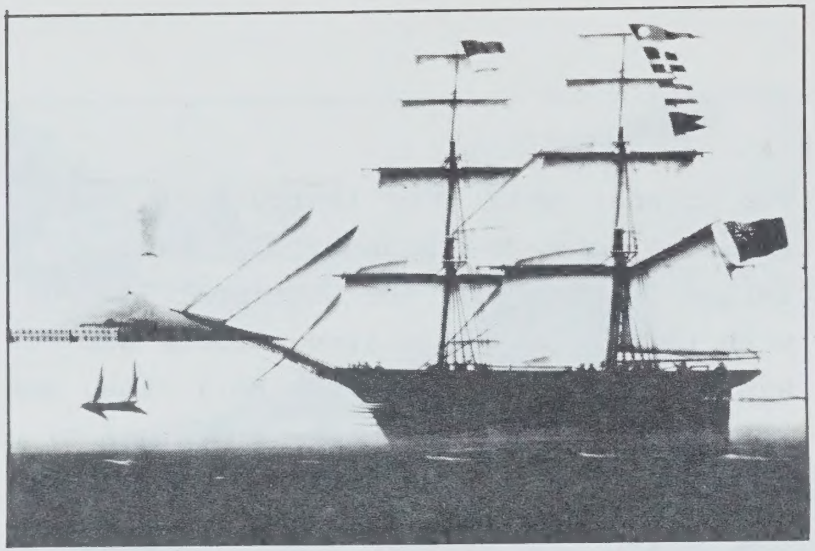
Wood engraved newspaper illustration with watercolour
after a painting by William Armstrong (1822-1914)
c.1870
960.232.9

When first built at Niagara in 1840, she was called the CITY OF TORONTO. She plied regularly between Toronto and Niagara from 1841-1863. When rebuilt at Detroit in 1863 she was renamed the RACINE. In 1864, she was sold to the Lake Superior Royal Mail Line and renamed the ALGOMA. In 1888, she was broken up for scrap.

Revival of Sail

Wooden steamships encountered many difficulties in the first half of the 19th century. They could not carry enough fuel to travel great distances, their paddles were inefficient at sea, and salt water encrusted the engines. Due to these problems with steam power, the plentiful amounts of timber available, and the greater involvement and interest of Canadian shipowners in trade, wooden sailing ships witnessed a boom in construction. The golden age of shipbuilding in the Maritimes between the late 1840s and late 1860s verifies this. A peak year of production was 1878 when almost 7,500 sailing ships were built in Canada. In the late 19th century, ships became faster and larger than ever before, sometimes with six or seven masts, all square rigged, or with a greater number of sails on the mainmast.

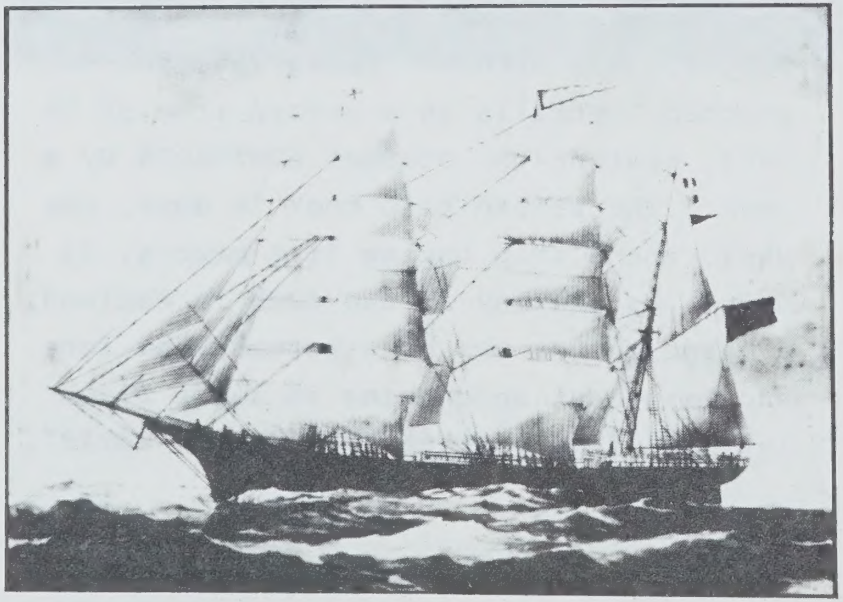
The clipper MARCO POLO (entry #49), built at Saint John, New Brunswick in 1851, sailed in that year for Liverpool loaded with timber and scrap iron. There she was purchased for the Black Ball Line, and refitted for the immigrant trade to Australia at the time of the gold rush. Her captain, James "Bully" Forbes, boasted he would have the MARCO POLO back to Liverpool within six months. She left England July 4, 1852 with 930 immigrants and reached Australia in a record time of 68 days, beating the steamer AUSTRALIA by a week. The return trip took 76 days, the whole round trip taking five months, 21 days. As she lay at the dock in England, a large banner was hung between the fore and main mast announcing in large black letters, "The Fastest Ship in the World".



40 The Brig SCOTIA

Watercolour and gouache
Michele Funno, Italy
19th century
978.298

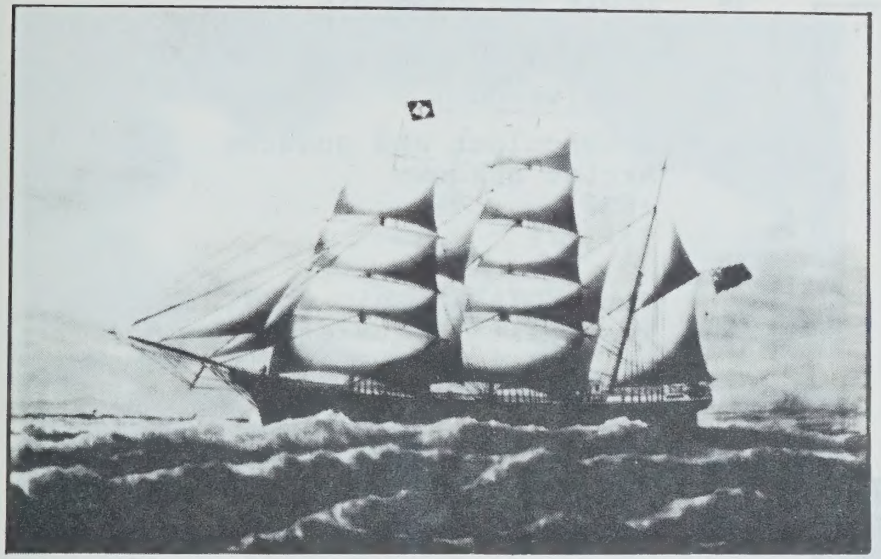
The SCOTIA, built in 1861 at Shelbourne, Nova Scotia, for Punton & Munn, was made of copper sheathed iron. Her dimensions were 167 feet long, 24 feet wide, 12 feet deep, and she weighed 284 tons.



41 The Barque HOWARD

Watercolour and pencil
Artist unknown
976.144

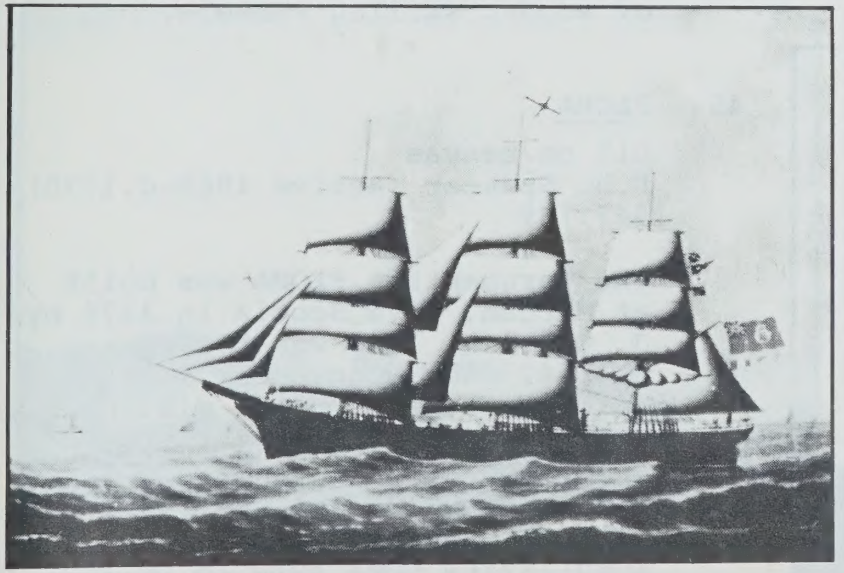
The barque HOWARD was built at Shelbourne, Nova Scotia in 1864. She was sold to a shipper in Melbourne, Australia in 1891.



42 CROWN JEWEL

Watercolour
E.J. Russell (1832-1906)
975.172

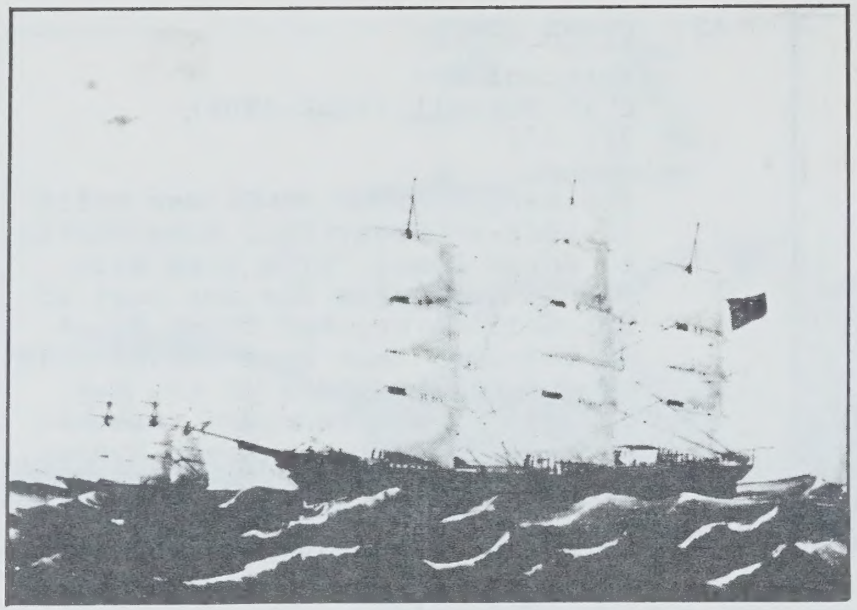
The barque CROWN JEWEL was built in 1868 at Grenville, Nova Scotia by Abram Young. The flag with the ⟨T⟩ indicates she was part of the well maintained Troop Fleet of vessels, that were sailed only by the best masters of the day. In 1890 it was recorded that she vanished on a run between Sydney, Nova Scotia, and New York. This watercolour, one of Russell's earliest ship portraits, is valuable because of its accurately rendered detail.



43 RYERSON

Oil on canvas
J. Loos, Antwerp
1874
973.136.2

This clipper ship, bearing a clearly painted full-length figure of a man as its figure-head, was built in 1872 at Salmon River, Nova Scotia. The Canadian ensign with the Nova Scotia provincial crest testifies to her provincial origin. The RYERSON was burned at Quebec in 1882, repaired, and in the end abandoned in the North Atlantic in 1891.



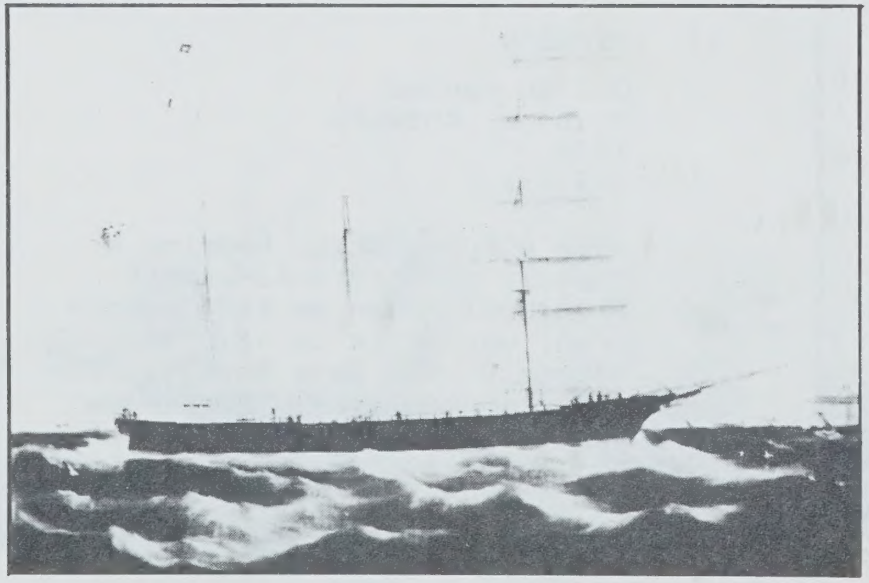
44 LYDIA and MAGNOLIA

Sailing Together from Quebec to Liverpool

Watercolour and gouache
Artist unknown
1874
971.279

The LYDIA, a ship of 1,200 tons, was built at Tusket, Nova Scotia in 1874. In 1891, it is recorded that she was owned by a prominent Yarmouth shipowner, William Law.

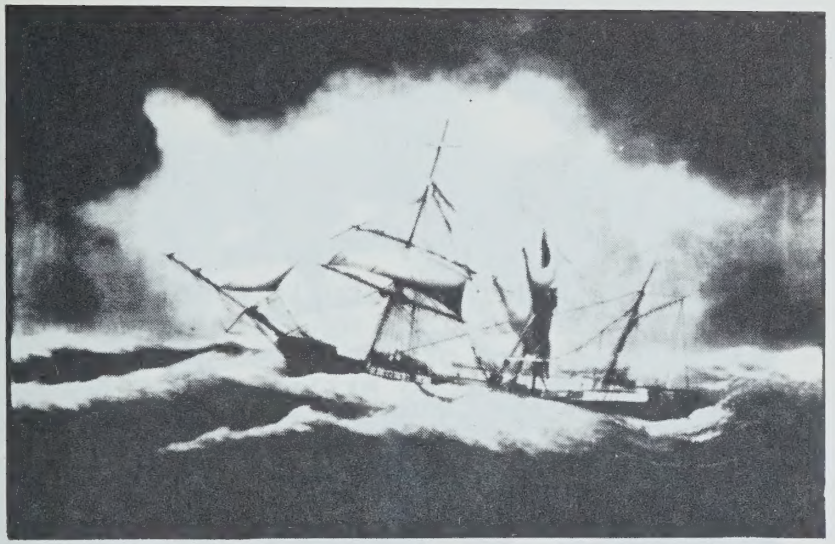
The MAGNOLIA, a ship of 998 tons was built at Plymouth, Nova Scotia in 1874 by Alex Simms. Both are good examples of the late 19th century boom in the construction of wooden sailing vessels.



45 FLORA

Oil on canvas
R.B. Spencer (active 1868-d.1890)
967.189

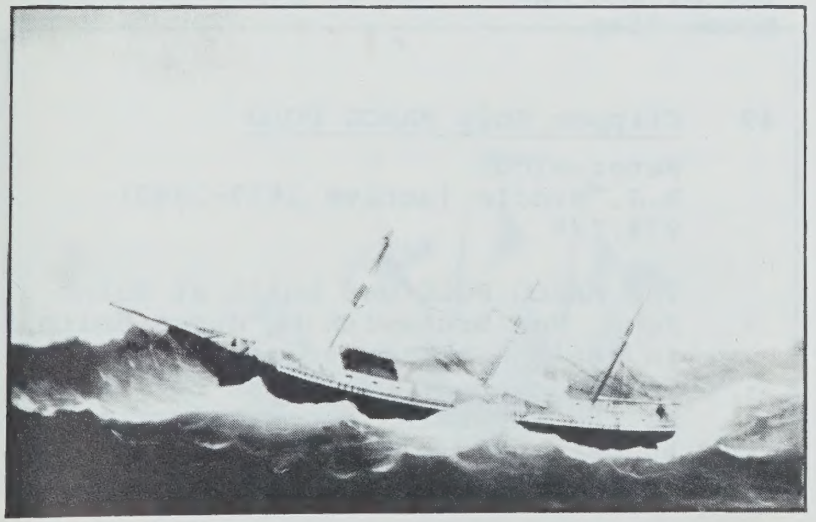
The barquentine FLORA was built at Maccan, Nova Scotia in 1875 by J. O'Brien. She was 571 tons, and 142 feet long. The four colourful flags on the mizzenmast, (which stand for the letters P B Q T) indicates this barquentine's registration number through international code. This way of identifying one's ship is called, "making one's number".



46 QUEEN VICTORIA

Oil on canvas
A.K. Brandgis
1876
966.259

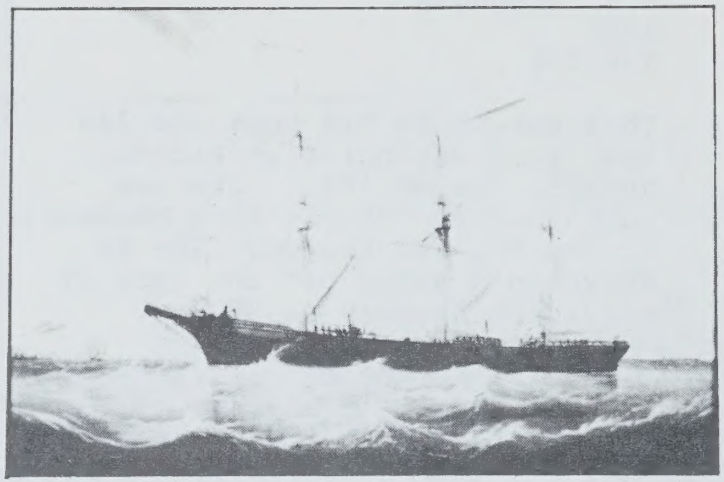
This barque is 518 tons and 145 feet long was built at Pictou, Nova Scotia in 1873. She was commanded by Captain Alex MacKenzie at the time portrayed. She is shown in a storm off the Isle of Wight, on January 4, 1876.



47 EMMANUEL SWEDENBURG

Oil on canvas
Anonymous Chinese port painter
c. 1880
979.185

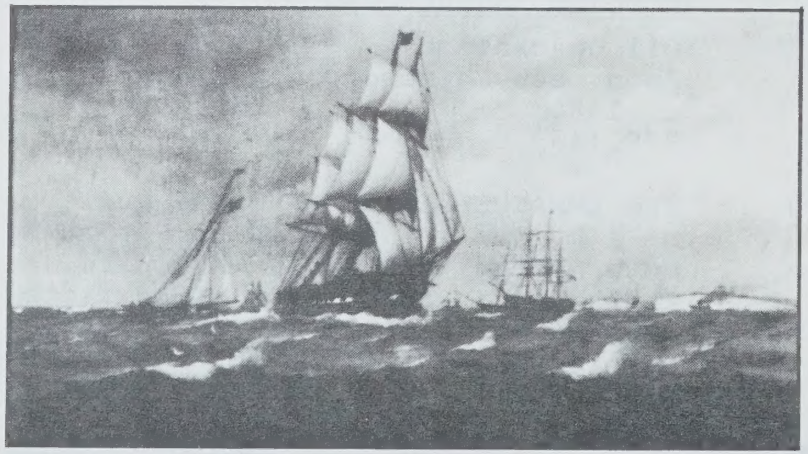
The EMMANUEL SWEDENBURG was built as a barque of 799 tons in Plympton, Nova Scotia, in 1878 by McDonald. In the same year Canada stood fifth on the list of ship owning countries of the world. The EMMANUEL SWEDENBURG had several owners before she was wrecked off Brazil in 1891. She was one of many late 19th century wooden sailing ships engaged in trade to the Far East.



48 ROTHIEMAY

Oil on canvas
Artist unknown
977.61

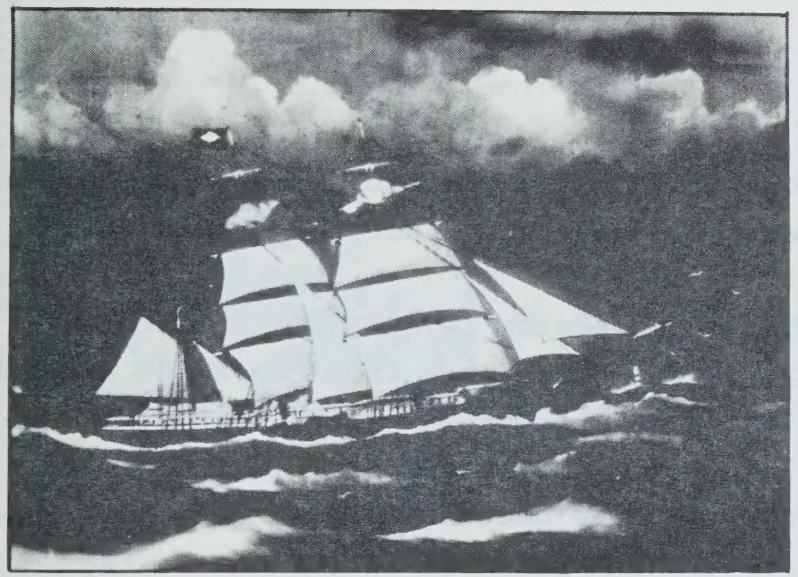
The barque ROTHIEMAY, built at Saint John, New Brunswick in 1881 by Joseph Kidd Dunlop, was part of the large fleet of vessels belonging to William Thomson & Co. At 1,246 tons, and nearly 200 feet long she was a fine specimen of late 19th century shipbuilding. On the top of the foremast and on the stern she displays her colours; her registration number in code is indicated on the four flags on the mizzen mast. The WT represents the house flag.



49 Clipper Ship MARCO POLO

Watercolour
R.J. Biddle (active 1877-1882)
978.249

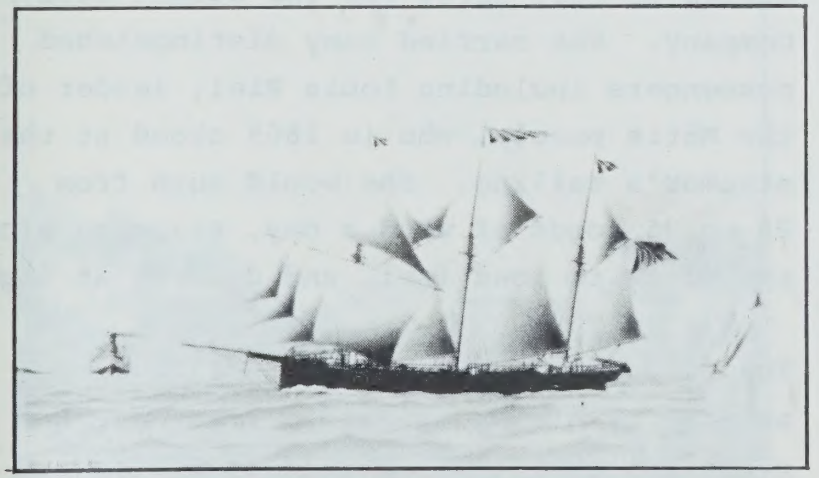
The MARCO POLO was built at Saint John, New Brunswick by James Smith in 1851. She served as an Australain packet of the Black Ball Line. As the NORWEGIAN she was lost in August, 1883 off Prince Edward Island.



50 PREMIER MACKENZIE

Gouache
Artist unknown
1884
974.57.2

Portrait of the barque PREMIER MACKENZIE, of Saint John, New Brunswick under Master WM. Barnard. She flies a mercantile house flag, probably that of the Troop Line.



51 SIR C.T. VAN STRAUBENZEE

Pencil and coloured crayons
Charles I. Gibbons (active c.1880-1920), Toronto
1894
973.238

The BENZY, as the Great Lakes barque was affectionately known by her crew, was built by Louis Skickluna of St. Catharines. With a carrying capacity of over 700 tons, she was launched in 1874 to serve as part of a fleet carrying supplies for the construction of the C.P.R. around the north shore of Lake Superior. In 1909, she was run down by the steamer EASTERN STATE off Port Colborne, drowning her master and most of her crew.

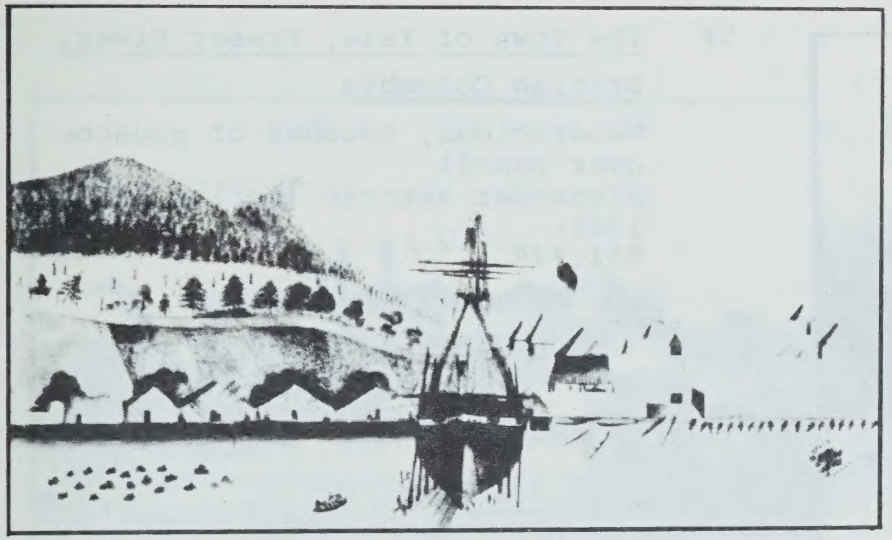
Western Waters

In the late 18th and early 19th century, ships were posted on the west coast for exploration to the Arctic, for protection during boundary disputes with the United States, and for the business of the Hudson's Bay Company. On the rivers of the Prairies and British Columbia, shallow draught steamers were as common as those on the Mississippi River. Freight boats travelling on extremely shallow rivers often had to portage their cargo by ox-cart around rapids or waterfalls. The sternwheeler rather than the side-wheeler became the most practical steamer because it received less damage in narrow channels and did not need to dock at a wharf.

The MODESTE (entry #52) was sent to the Pacific to stand guard as the British expected a confrontation over James Polk's "54° 40' or fight" slogans. He was prepared to claim for the United States all the land on the Pacific coast as far north as the southern boundary of Alaska.

The sternwheeler INTERNATIONAL (entries #56 & #57) took over from the ANSON NORTHRUP (entry #55), when it was crushed by ice in 1862. For many years, the INTERNATIONAL was the only boat on the Red River carrying freight and passengers from the United States to Fort Garry for the Hudson's Bay Company. She carried many distinguished passengers including Louis Riel, leader of the Métis people, who in 1869 stood at the steamer's railing. She would burn from 20 to 25 cords of wood a day, stopping along the river to load fuel, and docking at night.

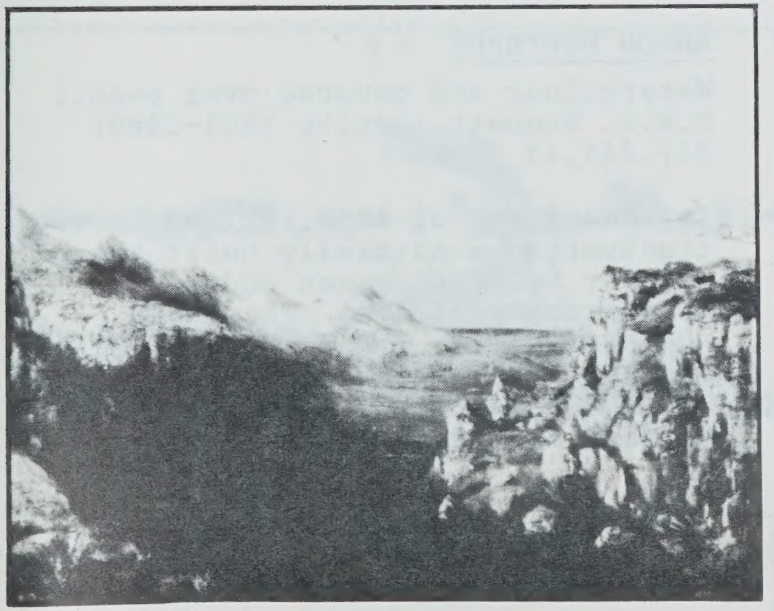
The view of Yale, B.C. (entry #54) was painted by Alexander Rattray, a topographical artist who served as Assistant Surgeon on board H.M.S. TOPAZ stationed at Vancouver Island between 1859 and 1861.



52 View of Fort Simpson with H.M.S. MODESTE, Sept.24,1844

Watercolour, pen and ink over pencil
Artist unknown
950.9.17

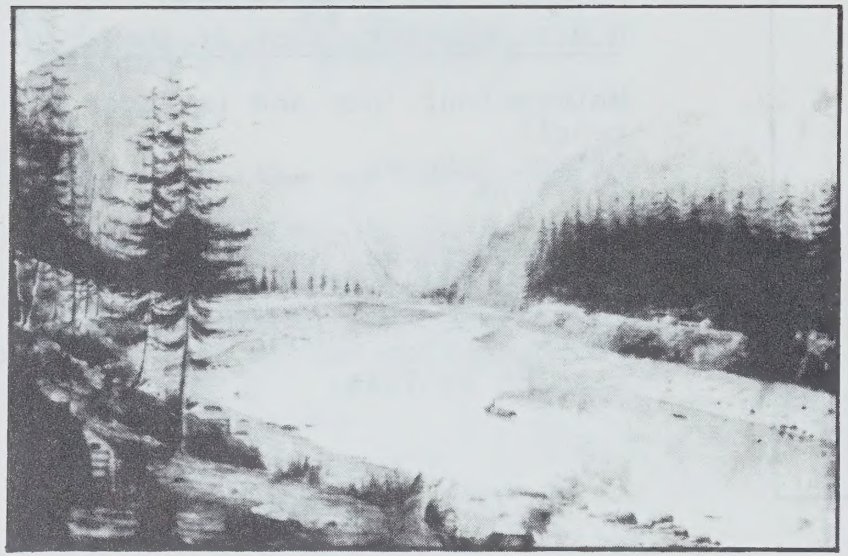
The MODESTE was an 18-gun ship built at Woolwich, England in 1837. She was transferred from South America to the north Pacific station in 1844.



53 S.S. BEAVER

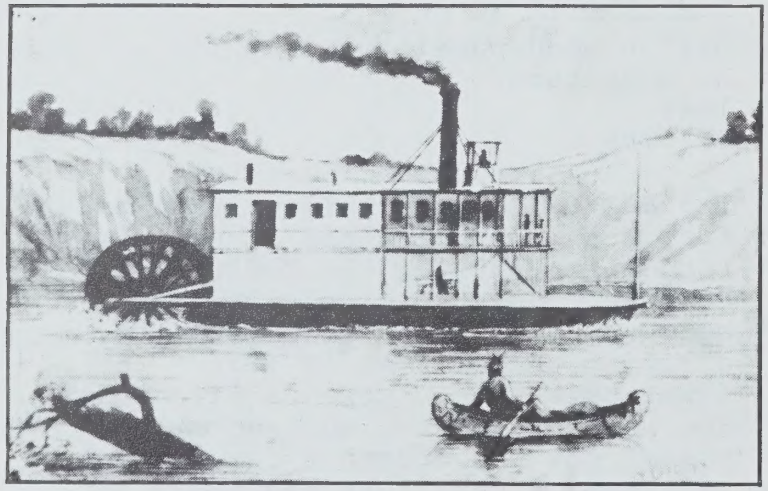
Oil on wood panel
A. Robertson
1844
962.106.2

The BEAVER, a wood-hulled, side paddle freighter was built and launched in London in 1835 for the Hudson's Bay Company. She travelled 225 days between England and Fort Vancouver, arriving there in April 1836 - the first steamship on the Pacific Coast. She worked as a freight and trading vessel for the Hudson's Bay Company, as a survey vessel in the 1860s for the British Admiralty, and from 1874 as a general freighter and tug. In 1888 she ran aground at the entrance to Stanley Park.



54 The Town of Yale, Fraser River, British Columbia

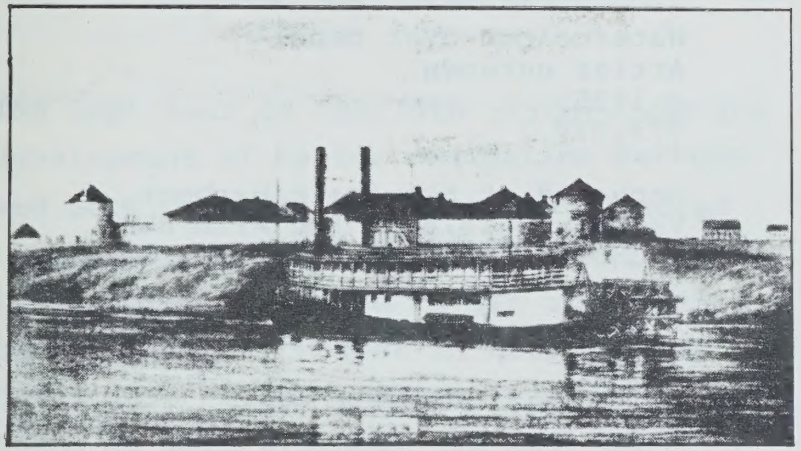
Watercolour, touches of gouache over pencil
Alexander Rattray (active 1859-1862)
958.249



55 ANSON NORTHRUP

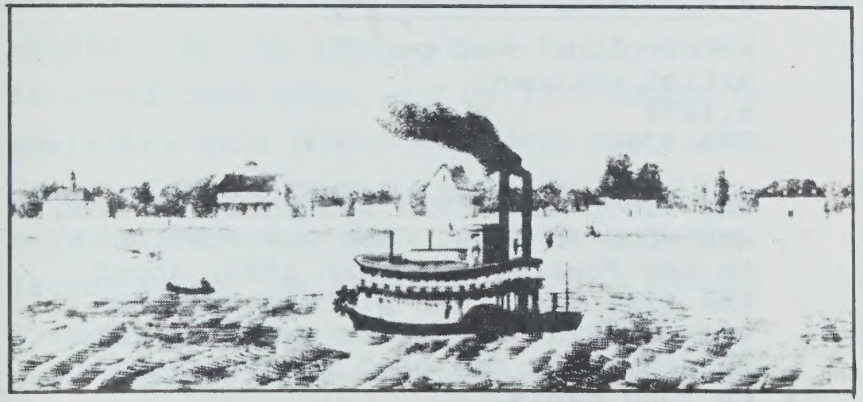
Watercolour and gouache over pencil
H.R.S. Bunnett (active 1881-1889)
957.265.63

In the winter of 1859, Mr. Northrup transported a partially built stern-wheeler by horse, oxen and sleigh across the prairies. The ANSON NORTHRUP became the first steamer on the Red River. Later it was owned by the Hudson's Bay Company, until crushed by ice in 1862.



56 Fort Garry and the Steamer INTERNATIONAL

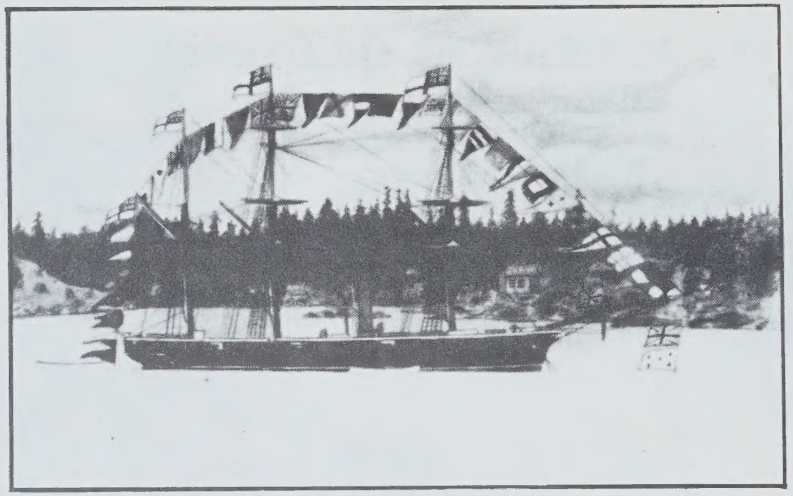
Wood engraved newspaper illustration with watercolour
c.1869
957.256.6



57 Manitoba - View of St. Boniface and the Steamer INTERNATIONAL

Wood engraved newspaper illustration with watercolour from the Canadian Illustrated News, July 20, 1872
958.153.2

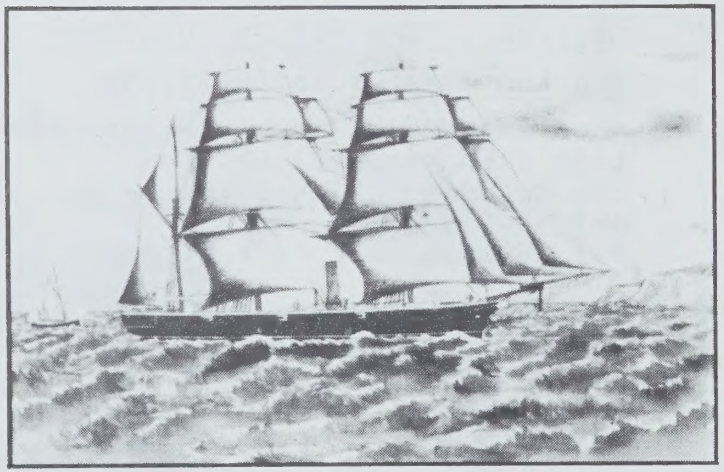
The INTERNATIONAL, formerly U.S.S. FREIGHTER, was rebuilt at Georgetown, Manitoba, in 1861.



58 H.M.S WILD SWAN at Esquimalt

Watercolour over pencil
Artist unknown
c.1895
973.370.1

Anchored at Esquimalt Harbour, Vancouver Island, the WILD SWAN jauntily flies close to 40 flags.



59 H.M.S. WILD SWAN at Sea

Watercolour over pencil
Artist unknown
c.1895
973.370.2

The sloop WILD SWAN was built of iron and wood in 1876. She was stationed in the Pacific early in 1895, about the time when this picture and the view at Esquimalt were painted. She burned coal, and used auxiliary sails on long hauls.

Triumph of Steam

The last half of the 19th century saw the development of better navigation methods and more powerful engines which ensured the transition from sail to steam. The iron steamship gained favour after 1850 because it was cheaper to build, could carry more cargo, and was less likely to break up when beached. By 1845 the stronger screw propeller was adopted for ocean-going vessels, replacing paddle-wheels. By the 1880s steel hulls were favoured over iron, and by 1889 masts for auxiliary sail power were done away with. Samuel Cunard, born in Halifax in 1787, began a steamship line in 1840 with the launching of the BRITANNIA. This established the first regular transatlantic mail service twice a month between Halifax, Boston and Liverpool. Sir Hugh Allan's Steamship Line began in 1856, providing weekly service from the St. Lawrence River to Liverpool. More routes were added in the 1860's and 1870s, and other Canadian steamship lines such as the Dominion Line and Beaver Line were formed in 1870 and 1876 respectively.

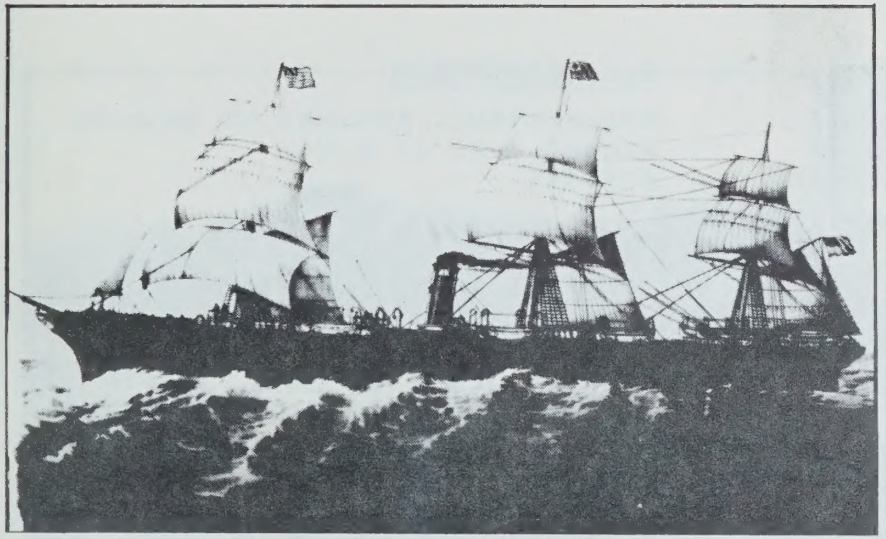
The S.S. SARMATIAN (entry #63) proved to be exceedingly fast and reliable. She was the first Allan straight-stemmed liner, unlike earlier ships which had curved bows. When the SARMATIAN was built in 1871 she was one of the longest and largest ships in the world, capable of holding over 1,000 passengers. The Canadian Illustrated News of May 30, 1874 shows her unloading troops from the Britsh war on the Gold Coast.

60 Heart's Content Bay, Newfoundland; Arrival of the Transatlantic Cable

Watercolour, touches of gouache over pencil
Robert Dudley (active 1867-1891)
1866
952.72.1

When she was launched in 1858, the GREAT EASTERN, "Wonder of the Seas", was six times the size of any vessel afloat at that time. She was 705 feet long, nearly 90 feet wide, 22,500 tons, and had paddlewheels as well as screw propellers, six masts, and five funnels. She ran on two sets of engines. Despite attracting widespread publicity and attention during her four years of construction, the vessel was unsuccessful as a passenger liner. However, because of her expansive hold she was used to lay transatlantic cables, the most important of which was the one pictured, the first successful cable between Ireland and Newfoundland. After twenty-five years she was broken up in 1886.

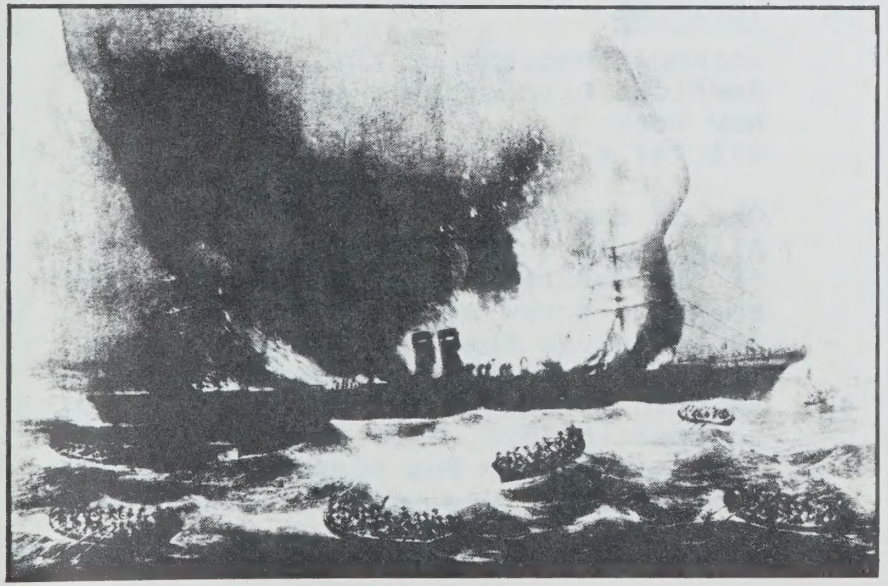
Dudley, the artist-in-attendance on the GREAT EASTERN's cable-laying trip across the Atlantic, pictured here, has captured the intense mood created by the technological event.



61 CITY OF MONTREAL of the Inman Line

Lithograph with watercolour
Published by Currier and Ives, New York
955.55

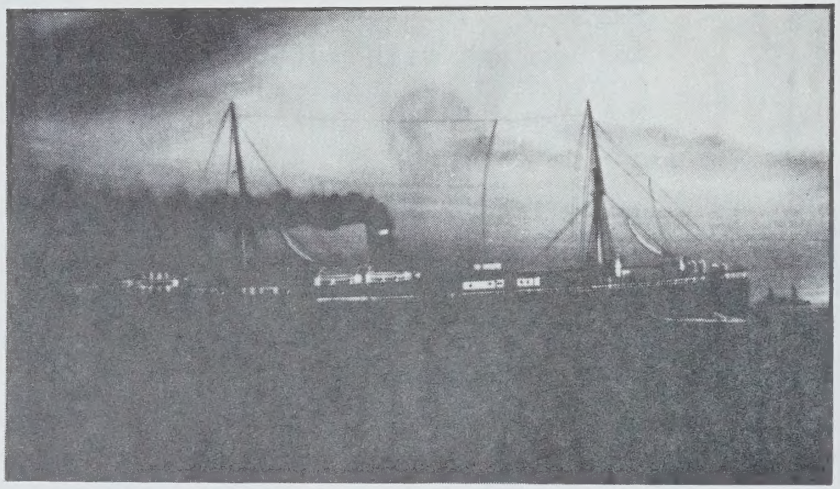
The CITY OF MONTREAL was built on the Clyde, England in 1872 with one funnel. She was 4,450 wide and travelled at 12 knots. Her uneconomical engine was rebuilt in 1877 and another funnel was added. In 1887, the CITY OF MONTREAL burned and all passengers aboard were rescued by the steamer YORK CITY.



62 CITY OF MONTREAL Burning on Her Voyage from New York to Liverpool, August 10th, 1887

Lithograph with watercolour
Published by Currier and Ives, New York
948.140.6

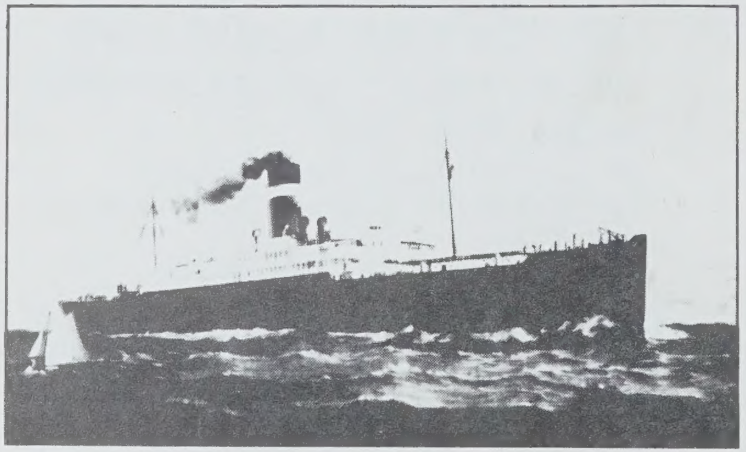
The Inman Line began in 1856 with a Liverpool to Philadelphia route. Later, ports of call included the alternate routes to New York and Glascow. In 1869, with the granting of a mail contract, the Inman Line began to sail to Halifax. The CITY OF MONTREAL, in the off season in winter, would take on passengers in Halifax as well as New York to bolster service. The mail contract to Halifax ceased in 1877.



63 S.S. SARMATIAN

Watercolour, touches of gouache
Signed C.K. or K.C.
972.195

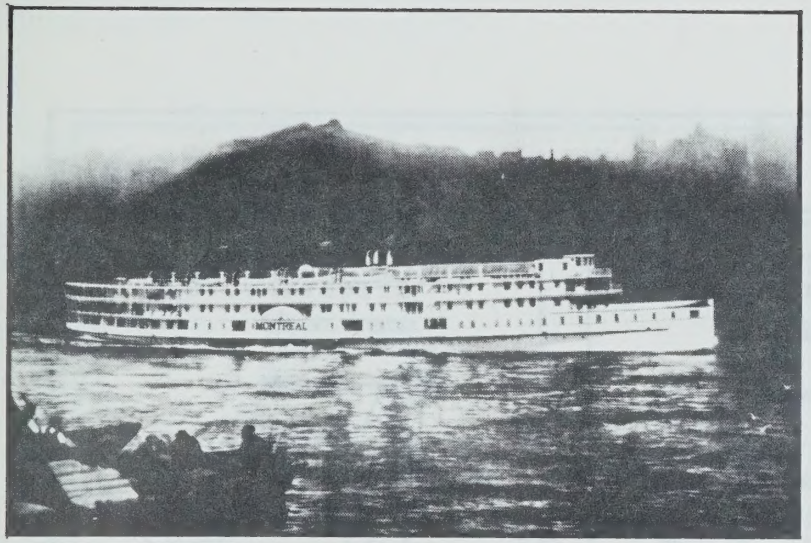
The SARMATIAN was built on the Clyde, England, and was launched in 1871. She was 370 feet long and 3,647 tons, and served until 1908.



64 TUNISIAN

Chromolithograph by the
American Lithographic Company,
New York
978.168.4

One of the finest steamers of the Allan Line on the St. Lawrence route of the Montreal-Liverpool service was the twin-screw steamer TUNISIAN of 10,576 gross tons. She was launched in Britain in 1900, served as a troop ship in World War I, and was sold and renamed in 1922. Her last voyage was from Antwerp to New Brunswick in 1928, whereupon she was sold for breaking up.



65 Richelieu and Ontario Navigation Co., Montreal-Quebec Line,

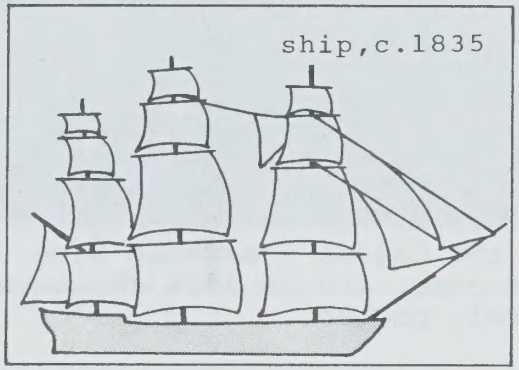
The MONTREAL

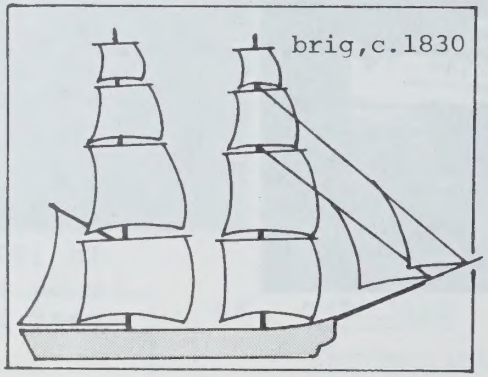
Chromolithograph by the Toronto Lithographic Co.
977.177.3

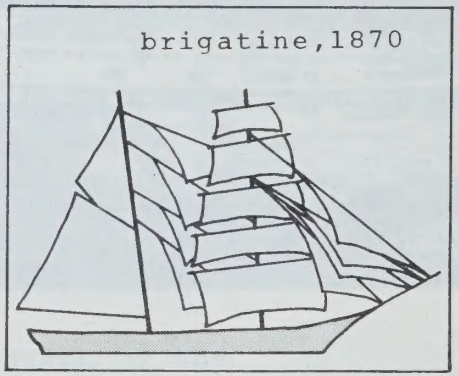
When built in Toronto in 1903, the MONTREAL was the largest passenger steamer in Canada. She was 332 feet long, 4,282 tons and travelled at a speed of 17 miles an hour. She carried about 750 passengers and was able to travel through the night. In 1913 the Canada Steamship Line took her over, and in 1926 she burned near Sorel, Quebec.

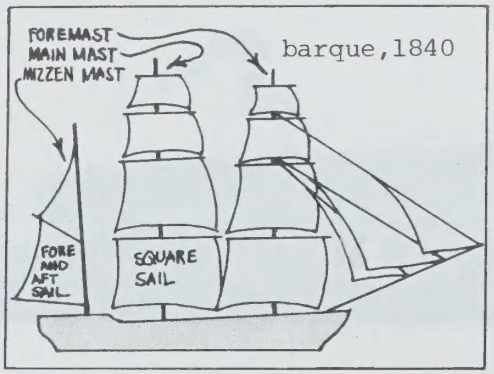
Appendix

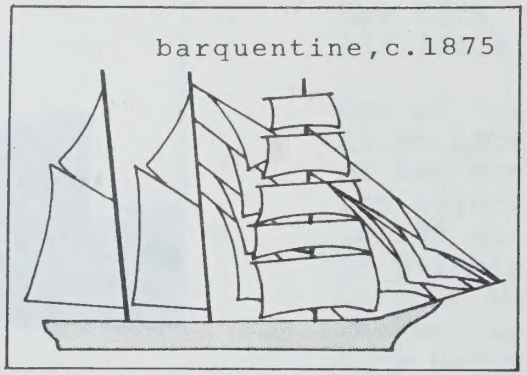
rigs

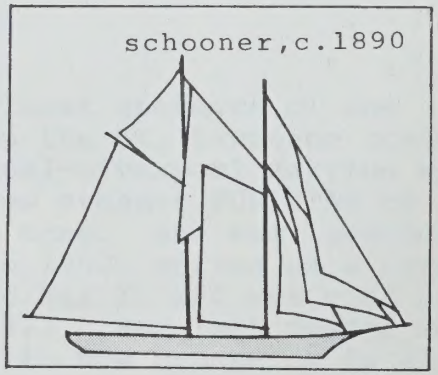












guns

RATING	AFTER 1756	AFTER 1810
first rate	100 or more	110 or more
second rate	84 - 100	90 - 110
third rate	70 - 84	80 - 90
fourth rate	50 - 70	60 - 80
fifth rate	32 - 50	32 - 60
sixth rate	up to 32	up to 32

some definitions:

SHIP-OF-THE-LINE - Three decked, fully armed and complemented first rate ship.

FRIGATE - Single decked, three masted navy escort vessel; about 36 guns by 1800.

CORVETTE - Flush decked warship with one tier of guns; about 18 guns by 1800.

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